Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

LABOUR AND THE WAR

Special Conference Report

MARCH 1940 SIXPENCE

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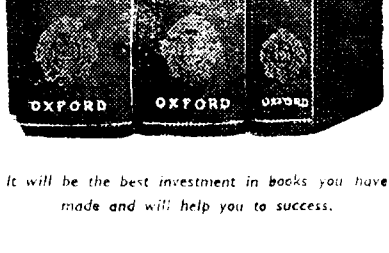

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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We gratefully acknowledge below a number of donations to our Development Fund. These are helping to meet rising costs of production and to prevent debt accumulating. We make no apologies for asking our readers to keep up the flow of these donations and to increase it. There are plenty of ways in which the work of the LABOUR MONTHLY *could be developed, but they all need money.*

We are particularly glad to have contributions from two LABOUR MONTHLY *Readers' Groups. They are valuable as representing an assurance to us of some regular monthly income over and above that derived from sales, and amount practically to a monthly guarantee. These Groups are doing important work in making more widely known and more clearly understood the political line of the Magazine, but also we for our part appreciate very much the help that they give us.*

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LABOUR & THE WAR
Our Conference

The delegate conference on "Labour and the War" called by THE LABOUR MONTHLY *on February 25 marked a big step forward in the movement against the war. There were 878 delegates appointed by 379 working-class organisations, representing a membership of 340,000.*

The report of the Credentials Committee, given in full below, indicates the character of a conference which packed out the capacious Holborn Hall and was marked throughout by its attention, eagerness and determination. The conference far surpassed the highest level hitherto recorded by a LABOUR MONTHLY *gathering, which was 365 delegates from 181 organisations at our Trade Union conference in August, 1935.*

1. THE RESOLUTION

WE DELEGATES OF 379 working class organisations, representing one third of a million workers having assembled in conference in London on Sunday, February 25, 1940, to discuss the problems created for the Labour Movement by the war and by the war policy of the leaders of our movement, now make the following declarations to our fellow workers throughout the country :

1 The present war of Britain, France and Germany is the consequence of capitalist crisis and rivalries, and is being waged in the sole interest of the capitalist ruling class. The whole course of capitalist policy since the first world war has prepared this war. The aims of the monopoly capitalists of both sides are aims of world domination, defeat of their capitalist rivals, subjection of nations and strengthening of their system of exploitation and of reaction against the working class.

This war does not serve, and cannot be made to serve, any interest or aspiration of the people. Knowing that the liberation of mankind from poverty and war can come only from the ending of capitalism, the source of these evils, we see in the statements of idealistic peace aims uttered by

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capitalist statesmen and their "Labour" imitators nothing but stale deception whose falsity has already been proved by the experience of the last war and after. The unchecked continuance of the war can only lead to universal misery and degradation.

We call upon all members of the working class and of the professions, upon shopkeepers, small business men and all who do not profit from war, to oppose its continuance. We call upon them to form a mighty alliance of opposition to the war government and all warmongers. We call upon our strong working class organisations to place themselves at the head of this mass movement against the war and lead it forward to early victory.

2 This war is equally directed against the working class in all countries, against the colonial peoples, and against Socialism. More and more clearly the war front is being organised with the widest grouping of capitalist countries against the land of victorious Socialism, the greatest stronghold of the international working class, the Soviet Union. The British ruling class is taking the lead in the organisation of this war front. The aid they are giving to Mannerheim, their catspaw in Finland, is an essential part of the anti-Soviet war plan. With the same aim they are preparing new fronts in the Near East and the Middle East.

The cause of the Soviet Union is the cause of world socialism, of the whole international working class. We ask the working class to remember how it stopped the anti-Soviet war in 1920, *by agitation and strike action, and to act swiftly now to prevent such a war once more.*

3 The policy of support of the war, pursued to-day by the leaders of the Labour Party, trade unions and co-operatives, is a betrayal of the principles of international socialism, which for decades have pledged the international working-class movement to unyielding opposition to capitalist wars. These leaders have identified themselves with the reactionary Government of Chamberlain and wholeheartedly support its war aims of defeating its capitalist rival and building antagonism to the Socialist Soviet Union. By the political and industrial truce they seek to paralyse the working class and leave it defenceless before capitalism. In place of

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fighting the class enemy, they turn their attack against members of their own organisations and against the land of victorious Socialism.

This betrayal is the culmination of the policy which the representatives of this leadership have pursued since the war of 1914. By their support of the war of 1914 they led 10,000,000 workers to the slaughter, and laid the basis for the robber treaties which followed. By their opposition to the Socialist revolution in the following years, they rebuilt the foundations of capitalist exploitation and the servitude of the masses. By this policy they prepared the way for the victory of Fascism in an extending series of countries in Europe. By their refusal of a united front against Fascism and war, they opened the gates to the present war. Now they take the lead in driving forward the war, they take the lead in the attack against the Socialist Soviet Union and against the militant workers.

This policy, which threatens the entire Labour movement with disaster and destruction, calls for the most active repudiation and resistance by all sections of the movement.

4 Our first task to-day is to extricate the whole Labour movement from the consequences of this betrayal. The responsible duty of all active sections and members within the Labour Party, trade unions, co-operatives and other organisations is :

(*i*) To rally all working-class organisations against the war and the Government.

(*ii*) To demand that all public representatives of working-class organisations whether in Parliament, on municipal bodies, as well as trade union and co-operative officials, end their support of the war, oppose all payment of war credits, cease to collaborate with the Government in joint committees for the purpose of the war, and take up active opposition to the war.

(*iii*) To end the political truce and oppose all war candidates by candidates of the united working-class forces, pledged to oppose the war, to defend the Socialist Soviet Union and to defend all the interests of the workers.

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(*iv*) To end the industrial truce and to take up active struggle for the economic and social demands of the workers against the Government and the employers.

(*v*) To build up the unity of the working-class forces in all localities and districts in pursuance of the above aims.

5 We place in the forefront our responsibilities to the young men who are being taken from their homes and occupations to be exposed to untimely and unmerited death as soldiers in an imperialist war. It is not only our task to secure substantial improvement in their pay and conditions and in the allowances to their dependents, but also to save the lives of these sons of the working class by ending the war itself.

6 The capitalist ruling class is forcing the burdens of its war upon the masses of the people ; through iniquitous taxes, higher prices without compensating wage increases, retrenchment in the social services, lengthened hours and suspension of Factory Act regulations and by the replacement of men by women employed at lower rates of pay ; by measures to restrict the right to strike and freedom of employment ; by starvation allowances to dependents of the men in the Forces.

These measures are not merely demanded by the cost of the war. They are required as much by the desperate and growing crisis in British capitalism which seeks a way out by fomenting general war and intensifying its exploitation of the masses. It is applying a programme of grim reaction against working-class standards of living, against social advance and against the limited democracy grudgingly conceded in its era of prosperity. The power of monopolies has become more and more completely dominant ; their representatives enter the Government ; they control the major industries through an apparatus of committees. The preparations for Fascism in Britain are thus being hastened.

Against this offensive the working-class organisations must close their ranks, must draw in the men and women workers who remain outside, must organise for struggle in the workshops and over whole industries. The reactionary Government, the monopolist owners, the financiers, must be confronted by the militant solidarity of the whole working class.

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Acting through all their economic and political organisations, through the trade unions and co-operatives, and especially through the development of the powerful Shop Stewards' movement in the factories, the workers now carry forward the fight for:

(*i*) Immediate all-round wage increases, the maintenance of wage standards when men are replaced by women, control of overtime and the restoration of Trade Union rights and conditions.

(*ii*) Increased pay and allowances for men in the armed forces and their dependents, increased benefits for the unemployed and Old Age Pensions of £1 per week for old people at 60.

(*iii*) Organisation of food supplies so as to prevent the cutting down of consumption by the working class, either by rationing or by Government control resulting in higher prices.

(*iv*) Extension of social services, education, health, housing and adequate A.R.P.

(*v*) Taxation of the rich, capital levy and confiscation of war profits.

(*vi*) Restoration and extension of democratic rights; common resistance to all attacks against the rights of any section of the working class.

7 The people of Great Britain can never win freedom whilst the toiling millions in the Empire are deprived of freedom. The liberation movements in India and other parts of the Empire are companion struggles to our own. We send our comrades in these lands a brotherly message of admiration and solidarity and pledge ourselves to match their heroism and determination in the common struggle ahead, and to support in every way their fight for freedom.

8 We know that our struggle has its parallel amongst our German, Austrian, Czech and Polish comrades, who form with us and our French comrades a mighty alliance of the international working class against the exploiters and warmongers. We know that only this united international struggle of the workers will end the power of the Chamber-

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lains, the Daladiers, the Hitlers and all the warmongers, and end the system which gives rise to wars. In these dark hours we turn our eyes to the Socialist Soviet Union, inspired by its example to undertake the achievement of our own emancipation, and thus destroy the dangers threatening the Soviet peoples whilst Central and Western Europe remain in the grip of predatory capitalism.

9 United in loyalty to the aims of the working class and of socialism, we pledge ourselves to carry forward the struggle for these aims and for the achievement of these tasks in the spirit of the Basle Resolution of the International Socialist Congress, adopted by all the representatives of international socialism twenty-eight years ago:

> *Should war none the less break out, the duty of all Socialists is to intervene to bring it promptly to an end, and to use the political and economic crisis created by the war to rouse masses of people from their slumbers and to hasten the downfall of capitalist domination.*

We pledge ourselves to win our fellow workers and the organisations we represent for this struggle. We set ourselves to rebuild and unite the fighting ranks of the workers, temporarily confused by the new crisis of the war and the treachery of the leadership. We fight to restore the independence and militancy of the labour movement. The people of our country have always known how to organise for struggle. We shall not be defeated if our leaders fail, but shall find fresh leaders and build new weapons. The working-class movement goes forward and will go forward to victory.

DOWN WITH THE WAR! DOWN WITH CAPITALISM! FORWARD TO SOCIALISM!

Readers are informed that copies of the above Resolution in leaflet form may be had (price 1/- per 100, post free) from our Offices, at 43 Museum Street, London, W.C.1. Readers are urged to take supplies for wide distribution, particularly within their respective organisations.

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2. R. PALME DUTT'S OPENING SPEECH

THIS CONFERENCE IS the most widely representative Conference of all sections of the Labour Movement which has yet met since the outbreak of war. The response to this Conference, which has taken even the organisers by surprise, shows the deep desire of the rank and file of the Labour Movement to end the present bankruptcy and passivity and find the way forward to an active fighting policy and leadership. A great responsibility falls on this Conference, whose outcome will be followed with close attention by active workers all over the country, to give the clear leadership which the present situation requires.

Since the last LABOUR MONTHLY Conference, the war against which we have given warning for years has broken out. To-day the war dominates all issues. After six months the war emergency is far more extreme and urgent than at its outbreak. The illusions of a " phoney war " are giving place to an understanding of its grim realities. Millions of men are under arms ; millions more are being called up. The scale of expenditure, the destruction by sea, the privation and food shortage, the inroads on the workers' standards and rights already develop in these few months at a far more rapid rate than in the last war. The war is advancing to world war.

> *Modern war is war of attrition, prolonged, unending and indecisive. The inevitable general armed conflict will be a life and death struggle, unprecedented in the history of the world.* (VOROSHILOV, in March, 1939).
>
> *The second imperialist war is an unparalleled calamity to mankind. The entire world will be swept with death, disease, hunger, unemployment, curtailment of civil rights and destruction of families.* (MAO TSE TUNG, on September 14, 1939).

More and more clearly the war is directed against the working class in all countries and against Socialism. The French workers have already been deprived of their rights. The same fate threatens the British workers. The armies, war-planes and battleships are gathered against the land of socialism, the Soviet Union. At any moment, if the reactionaries have their way, open war may be begun. In this line-up the pretences of " war against fascism " are dropped. Mussolini, Franco and Mannerheim form a common front with Chamberlain, Daladier and Roosevelt, with Citrine and Blum, against Socialism.

All this must compel all thoughtful sections of the Labour Movement, even those who may have been hesitant in the first months, to face freshly the present situation, where they are going, and what must be done.

WHERE DOES THE LABOUR MOVEMENT STAND ?

In this crisis of renewed and extending world war, the second within a quarter of a century, revealing the mortal crisis of capitalism,

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and raising ever more urgent issues of the whole future of capitalism and socialism, of the whole future of the workers, where does the Labour Movement stand ? This is the vital question that must be faced.

For years the entire Labour movement has proclaimed its opposition to a new capitalist war, has declared that never again would it be taken in as in 1914, has issued solemn pledges to meet war with a general strike, etc. Vain words, so long as the actual policy of the dominant leadership has been one of co-operation with capitalism. The proclamations of peace time are forgotten when war begins. When war begins, it is declared to be " a different kind of war," in which " the enemy " must be defeated. So it was in 1914. So it is again to-day. The workers are tied to the war machine of capitalism.

Yet this war was no bolt from the blue. War is the continuation of capitalist politics. It was prepared by the whole policy of the capitalist rulers since the last war. For eight years the second imperialist war developed in its opening phase out of the world economic crisis. During all these years the entire Labour Movement in this country predicted that, if the policy of the " National " Government were continued, it would result in war involving this country. Yet when this war comes we are told that we must support it.

We are told that, because the working-class movement demanded a collective stand against aggression, a firm Peace Front with the Socialist Soviet Union, to prevent the threatening war, therefore we must support the war which has come about through the refusal of this policy. On the contrary. We fought for a Peace Front, not in order to launch a world war, but in order to prevent a world war. Now that the war has followed through the refusal of the Peace Front, the fight for peace necessarily goes forward as the fight to end the war by the mass action and victory of the working class. The same fight against the whole policy of the Chamberlain Government goes forward to its highest phase.

The Chamberlain Government has not changed its policy, but pursues the same aims of maintaining and extending its imperialist interests and of hostility to the Soviet Union. Previously in the Munich period it sought to realise these aims by promoting war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. When the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact defeated these plans, it seeks to carry forward the same aims through other forms, by waging war against Nazi Germany for its imperialist aims, while at the same time developing the first stages of war against the Soviet Union and seeking to establish an alternative reactionary Government in Germany which will act as a tool for these anti-Soviet war plans.

The Real Reactionary Aims

Around these real reactionary aims of imperialism a host of idealistic phrases and imaginary " war aims " or " peace aims " are built up

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and presented by Liberal-Labour spokesmen as a cover for supporting the war. This is self-deception as in 1914, when the similar " Labour War Aims " and Wilsonian propaganda were followed by the realities of Versailles. The aims of a war are determined by the class which wages the war. The capitalist class can only wage war for capitalist aims. Behind the talk of " Federal Union," etc., lie the real aims of the domination of Anglo-French monopoly capital in Europe.

The attempt to tie the Labour Movement to support of imperialist war is a hundred times more serious to-day than in 1914, because it takes place at a time when the world Socialist revolution has already developed for a quarter of a century and Socialism rules one-sixth of the world, and when the battle between the capitalist world and the Socialist world governs all the issues of the world situation. Support of Imperialist war becomes support of war by embattled reaction against the land of working-class power and Socialism. This transformation of the supposed " fight against Fascism " is revealing itself already to-day. The slogans of " democracy " against " fascism " are being replaced by the slogans of " Western civilisation " against " barbarism," i.e., of capitalism against Socialism.

The policy of the dominant leadership of the Labour Party, the trade unions and the Co-operatives, is the culmination of their support of Chamberlain and British Imperialism through the fateful years leading to the war. They now claim that in supporting the war they are taking a stand against Fascism and against aggression as they have always done before the war. This entire claim is false. When Spain was attacked by Fascist invasion, they stood for non-intervention. When Czechoslovakia was attacked, they applauded Munich. Only when Chamberlain moved to imperialist war under cover of lying phrases about a stand against Fascism and against aggression did they echo his lying phrases and move with him. The only consistent reality of their policy is the consistent support of Chamberlain and British imperialism. This is the real essence of their policy behind the phrases.

This policy, sacrificing the workers to the aims of capitalist war, opens the gates to the overwhelming onslaught of the capitalists on the working class and confronts the Labour movement with a situation of the most urgent crisis. The economic and social offensive which has already been carried through is only a beginning of what is preparing. The working-class struggle is paralysed by the political and industrial truce, which is denied in theory and carried out in practice. The offensive against Socialism abroad is accompanied by the offensive against the militant workers at home. The way is prepared for the rapid advance to Fascism in Britain.

Rebuild Independence and Fighting Unity

What must be done ? In this menacing situation the greatest responsibility rests on the workers in the Labour Party and the Trade Unions.

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The first necessity is to build anew the fighting ranks and independence of the working-class movement. It is essential to shatter the industrial truce and political truce. The struggle needs to go forward against and in spite of the leadership which has betrayed the cause of Socialism.

Every member of the Labour Party, every trade unionist and co-operator and every local section and organisation can play their part in this. The stirrings among the engineers, the miners, the railwaymen and others, the anti-war contests in the bye-elections and the stand against the war by many of the most important Trades Councils and local and district organisations begin to show the way forward. This is only a beginning.

We need to take up the position of every public representative of the Labour movement and of every official and delegate, to demand that they cease support of the war and collaboration with the Government and employers, oppose all war credits and imposing of burdens and exactions on the workers and take up active struggle for the interests and demands of the workers.

Against the threats and intimidation, which are being brought into play to check the advance, we need to build up such an indissoluble unity of the mass of the workers and local organisations as can meet and defeat every attempt at splitting. This unity needs above all to be built in the factories.

The active struggle needs to be carried forward for the aims and demands of the workers, for the defence of the Soviet Union and the stopping of military supplies to the enemies of the Soviet Union, for the defence of the colonial peoples for the protection of the standards and rights of the workers.

We seek to build, around the common front of the working class, the broadest front of the masses of the people against the war, the War Government and the war profiteers. In this way we seek to prepare the conditions for the further development of active struggle against the war, and for the most rapid possible advance to the permanent aims of the working-class movement, the conquest of working-class power and socialism.

This is the call which needs to go out from this conference to the whole working-class movement. This Conference needs itself to be the prelude to further wider and more representative conferences, regional conferences and the massing of the forces of the working class throughout the country in preparation for the urgent issues and conflicts which are now before us and whose outcome will be decisive for the future of mankind.

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3. THE CREDENTIALS' REPORT

A total of 878 delegates were appointed to the Conference, representing 379 organisations with a membership aggregating 340,000. Trade unions were markedly in the lead, there being 298 delegates from 132 union organisations ; and from seven shop steward and factory bodies 16 delegates came. Co-operative representation was also noteworthy, 32 organisations being represented by 65 delegates. A dozen Labour Party organisations were represented by 23 delegates, a figure that is noteworthy as a beginning, while indicating the task that lies ahead of active Labour Party members.

Left Book Club Groups were well represented—to the tune of 26 (69 delegates). And it is an interesting note on the wide appeal of the Conference that there were 13 delegates appointed by five tenants' defence organisations ; while 69 delegates came from 34 miscellaneous cultural, professional and students', peace and anti-Fascist and similar bodies.

There were 92 visitors, in addition to the appointed delegates, of whom the details are as follows :

	Organisations	Delegates
Trades Councils : Trade and Labour Councils	20	39
Trade Unions (1 National Committee ; 2 District Committees; 109 Branches)	112	259
Shop Stewards (Nat. Council, Aircraft)	1	3
Factory Committees	6	13
Labour Party (7 Borough and Divisional ; 4 Wards ; 1 League of Youth)	12	23
Co-operatives (1 Education Committee; 25 Guilds ; 5 Co-operative Party Branches ; 1 Youth Organisation)..	32	65
Communist Party (1 District Committee ; 78 Branches ; 9 Groups)..	88	242
Young Communist League (National Committee ; 1 District Committee ; 27 Branches)	29	62
Left Book Club Groups	26	69
N.U.W.M. Branches	4	4
Tenants' Associations (National Federation and 4 Local)	5	13
Cultural and Professional Groups and Societies	11	29
Peace and Anti-Fascist Societies ..	10	17
Colonial Societies	6	9
Russia To-day Society..	2	4
Miscellaneous National Bodies ..	5	10
Miscellaneous Local Bodies	6	9
Labour Monthly Readers' Groups	5	8
	379	878

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4. THE CONFERENCE DISCUSSION

AT THE OPENING SESSION of the Conference, Councillor R. Silkoff, secretary of the Stepney Trades and Labour Council, was in the chair. After the opening address by R. Palme Dutt, editor of THE LABOUR MONTHLY, the discussion was opened by **Isobel Brown** (Anti-Fascist Relief Committee): Already it is quite clear the lengths to which the ruling class are prepared to go in putting the whole burden of this war on the working class. The wholesale prices of foodstuffs have gone up 33 per cent., and the wholesale prices of manufactured goods have gone up 40 per cent. A clearer example of the drive towards Fascism is seen from the experiences of the working class movement in France.

Daladier announces the need for sacrifices and Blum underlines it, and Jouhaux—one of the leaders of the French Trade Union Movement—in a statement recently said that in France "they could not allow any Labour conditions or Socialist legislation to stand in the way of the carrying through of the war aims of the French Government." It is clear that it was not only the French ruling class that launched the attack against working class conditions, but they had the alliance and the open leadership of the French Socialist Party and the reactionary Trade Union leaders. The suppression of *Humanité* and *Ce Soir*, the Communist Party and the Young Communist League, the breaking of the constitutional practices of the French republic, all these were the signal for the further attacks on the workers.

Krishna Menon (India League): It is important to remember that in every particular this is an Imperialist War. When you look at the personnel involved in this War, out of about six hundred millions of people who are involved about five hundred millions are Colonial peoples. 420 millions in the British Empire and 65 millions in the Republican Empire of France.

In India the resistance to the war has already had successes, of which we hear very little in this country. Numbers of men and women, Socialists, Communists, trade union leaders, are imprisoned for opposition to the war. The Indian National movement, standing as I believe it to be, at the very spearhead of the movement of revolt, is opposed to war of imperialist aggression.

Bell Keats (Colonial Information Bureau): At the outbreak of the War the Australian Labour Party leadership issued a manifesto declaring their war aims. They declared that the Australian Labour Party would do its utmost to defend the integrity of the British Commonwealth of nations, a commonwealth of slaves, of 400 million colonial peoples throughout the world. The Australian working class is already smashing its way through this leadership of Social Democracy, building a united working class movement against imperialist war.

In the fight against the war in Australia, its importance and significance is the speed with which this movement has developed. In October, the leaders of the three largest Unions in Australia went on record against the war and called for the immediate ending of the war. The whole of the Victorian trade union movement, 200,000 organised workers, came out for the ending of the war and the declaration of an armistice. Queensland workers also came out against the war. At the beginning of December in New South Wales, over 300,000 organised workers passed a powerful resolution against the war.

Thus of the whole of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, representing 750,000 people, 600,000 have recorded their voice against the war. This means that about 75 per cent. of the organised Australian working class has quite forcibly expressed its opinion against the war.

Surat Ali (Colonial Seamen's Association): The unity of the Empire, so-called, is the union of the Indian potentates, princes and the like with the ruling classes of this country. The attitude of the British ruling class in wartime to the Indian workers is illustrated by the recent case which came up in Poplar of the ship's officer who had struck an Indian member of the crew. This is typical of the treatment of the Laskars.

S. Silver (Amalgamated Engineering Union): We will soon be asked to finance the Finnish war and in my area there is a growing feeling that the money and the arms which we are making should not be sent to fight an Imperialist war against Russia, whom we realise are our own brothers. My appeal is to all delegates here from the A.E.U. to go back to the branches and explain the nature of this Conference, in order that a big united effort of engineers be started to refuse that any money out of the members' pockets should be used to fight a war which is not in the interests of the working class.

Councillor J. E. Swain (Peterborough Trades and Labour Council): Having been 35 years a member of the Labour Party and having been through the experience of the last war, I am amazed that our leadership should have again fallen into support of the war as in 1914. To my way of thinking, the man who

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represents the Labour Party and the Trade Union Movement should not lend a hand to the Government.

John Morris (Lambeth Labour Party): The overwhelming majority of the members of the Labour Party are working class people, but the whole tragedy of the Labour Party is that the majority of the leaders, both nationally and in those areas where the Party is strong are, in fact, ex-members of the working class. They are driven into fear of a radical change and of the establishment of Socialism.

W. Robb (Amalgamated Engineering Union): I want to call the attention of the delegates to the position where we have so many non-Union factories along the Thames. Anyone known to be an active trade unionist is shot outside quickly if he is found agitating for trade unionism. We have lads of 17 years of age getting 4½d. an hour for manufacturing some of the most expensive products in the engineering trade. We have diluted labour now. We have carpenters doing engineers' work, printers doing engineers' work and labourers, and they work a 60-hour week, five shifts, for the magnificent sum of 53s. 6d. a week.

Until we can tackle these problems we cannot begin to teach the workers how to struggle against the war.

Lorna Hay (University Labour Federation): Our Federation in January held a conference in Liverpool at which resolutions were carried against the war and upholding the action of the Soviet Union in Finland. These were carried by 49-9 and 50-2. The American students are also wholeheartedly against this war, like the majority of the American people and at a recent emergency meeting of American Students' Union this feeling was clearly shown. In Yugoslavia four thousand students took part in Belgrade in a demonstration against the Imperialist War and for a pact with the Soviet Union, and there are only five thousand students in the University of Belgrade.

Perhaps the most striking example of all is the example of the Indian Students.

Councillor Black (East Fulham Labour Party): In the Labour Party itself there is a very grave lack of attention and a very great lack of understanding of the International situation, which has been given second place in the Labour Party at any time. The organisation of the Labour Party is to blame. For many years they have refrained from giving time to political education of the rank and file of the movement. I do appeal to all the trade unionist members to come back into the Management Committees.

Ted Willis (Young Communist League): The basic policy of the capitalist class for centuries, insofar as the youth are concerned, is to try and capture the young working-class lads and girls at a period of life when their ideas are forming, shortly before they leave school, and after they have left school, and organise them away from the working class, under bourgeois capitalist influence.

Thus we have in this country about four out of every ten, that is 35 per cent., of young working-class people organised in mass youth organisations which are absolutely under the influence and control of the capitalist class. These organisations grew up solely because of the inability and the fear of the Labour and trade union leaders, insofar as the youth were concerned, and their refusal to organise the youth.

Ivor Montagu: A comrade had spoken of that feeling shown generally of being tied, of not knowing what to do to resist the capitalists' attack on conditions. For six months this attack had been going on without a real fight being made. But it was impossible to separate this question from the general question of the purpose of the war. The reason why it had been possible for this attack to go on for six months was precisely because of the support given by the leadership of the working-class organisations to the war.

* * *

At the afternoon session, W. H. Thompson took the chair, and the first speech came from **Arthur Horner** (South Wales Miners' Federation): It is estimated that this country this year will have to expend the enormous sum of two thousand five hundred million pounds in order to carry on the war even at the present rate of travel. Those who are not for the struggle to compel the employing class to meet the costs of the war, whether they desire it or not, are in favour of the policy of making the workers pay for the war.

In a war the central policy of capitalist economy must be, there is no escape from it, to drive down the consumption of the people and to increase the exports so as to enable the war to be carried on.

Workers must be prepared to eat less, wear less and sacrifice all the things which the other side think we can manage to do without. This proposal to reduce the consumption of the people means in practice that there must be a reduction of 20 per cent. in rates and mortgages and a 33⅓ per cent. in fuel lighter, and water, 25 per cent. tobacco, 20 per cent. of furniture and hardware. They are asking in this case that the people shall content themselves with a reduction not with 33 per cent., but to the extent of 66 per cent. and even 70 per cent. The

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cost of living figures according to the Board of Trade show an increase of 14 per cent. There have been wage increases which have followed from industry to industry. In certain industries where organisation is weak, there have been no increases at all, but taking the average in wages over the whole of the industrial working class of the country, it is estimated that it is 4 per cent., so that already there has been a 10 per cent. reduction in the wages of the working class of this country.

It is not only wages as such that have been affected, but the incomes of the families have been still further reduced. When you take wage-earners into the army, you are denuding the home of a considerable part of its normal income.

The *Financial News* says that the example of France shows that it is possible for a Democratic Government to check the rise in wages quite as efficiently as in a totalitarian state.

It is clear, therefore, there is no intention on the part of the capitalist class to provide the means itself to carry on the war. And those who say the trade unions cannot function in the war in the interests of their members are denying the justice of those who argue for the continuation of trade unions, for, if we cannot do anything because there is a war, if we cannot pursue our purpose, then we ought to cease to exist at all. We have therefore to say wages must at least keep pace with the increase in real prices ; we have, further, to declare that sufficient rations must be provided to enable the worker to work and to keep his family in reasonable health.

We have had reason in South Wales to complain bitterly because of the failure to provide meat upon which our people must sustain their health to carry on their arduous work. In one region three weeks ago there were seventeen butchers' shops ; these seventeen butchers' shops had between them what one single shop had prior to the war. This is a form of reducing consumption of the people. You are not short of coal in London because there is not enough coal. Why, the mines on Tyneside are working two and three days a week for the past month. There is plenty of coal in the country, but placing impediments in the way of transport is a form of reducing the consumption of the people, and that in this bitter period of the year !

We must be ready to see that taxation of earned incomes on the level that our people usually get shall not be permitted.

We cannot agree that this attempt to reduce wages shall be allowed to pass just because it is the result of a Government enactment. In the same way, there must be no permission given to " compulsory savings."

The trade union leaders must understand that they cannot be permitted to function as co-opted members of a capitalist Government and remain leaders of the working-class fighting against that capitalist government.

The tasks involved in securing the carrying through of the line of struggle in the course of the war will be tremendous. There will be divisions, attempts to establish splits, utilisation of Government forces to deal with " upstarts," measures which in the last analysis are calculated to have the effect of disarming the workers whilst their standards are being reduced. Now more than ever it is necessary for those workers in the trade union movement to realise that we cannot depend upon a lead from the top. The top do not believe in using the trade unions for the purposes for which they were set up. They believe in carrying on the war of victory, whatever the costs, and we are not prepared to pay the cost, and therefore we must stop the war.

It is impossible for anyone to logically argue : I am in favour of carrying on the war, I want war with Finland, I want planes and guns and ammunition and men to go, and then argue I do not want a reduction in the standards of the people living in England. It is not logical, it is not sense.

W. J. R. Squance (Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen) : I want to point out that any effective onslaught on the independence and free functioning of the trade unions by restrictive legislation, their rights to initiate and support movements for higher wages and improved conditions of service, recognition of the inalienable right of trade unions to defend the standards of life of those whom they represent against attacks, opens the door wide for depressing the conditions of life of the workers, by decreases of wages, of the purchasing power of wages, and also the increasing of hours of labour, which has already been effected in France. And what France does to-day under the present arrangement is fairly clear that England will do to-morrow.

Further, wage agreements are based on cost of living figures. You cannot hope to catch up with the cost of living, because the cost of living is always in front. In France already you have had the 40-hour week set aside, you have had 45 hours introduced. Furthermore, wages have been deducted from the workers and placed in the National Solidarity Fund.

These restrictive measures already considered necessary and applied by France, who is supposed to fight and destroy Fascism, are perilously akin to the labour conditions obtaining in Fascist countries.

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In war and peace the workers must struggle for the establishment of their social and political rights plus the maintenance of decent conditions of employment and life, from a harsh capitalist system in which rent, interests and dividends always reign supreme. That struggle must never cease.

I want to point out that from this conference we should proceed forthwith to organise 100 per cent. trade union membership; 100 per cent. interest in all trade union activities; 100 per cent. in support, by word and deed, of all wages claims, increase the holidays with pay, adequate pensions for all at 60, adequate factory and compensation legislation; 100 per cent. support for the furtherance of all social and educational services.

And last but not least, 100 per cent. support for the abolition of the hideous principle of war as an instrument of policy, for the settlement of differences between nations for all time. Together with full and unqualified support for the establishment of real democratic peace and international understanding between the workers of all nations as the only guarantee for the real emancipation of the toilers of the whole world.

Rose Smith (*Daily Worker*): There are certain people in Transport House hoping to get the position of Director General of Labour Forces in this country. They are not people who are friends of the progressive movement of the working class. We are going to place in their hands power, unless everyone who claims to be a militant trade unionist is on the alert. They are going to use the weapon of cheap labour and degrade the whole standards of the workers in this country.

We see a tremendous movement of women inside the factory, most of them unorganised, who are actually staging strikes and demanding an increase in wages. There is a movement we must harness, a movement which unless we do means the general degradation of our own conditions.

W. Swanson (Amalgamated Engineering Union): Only on the basis of accepting the policy which was outlined in the opening session this morning can we, the organised workers, really go forward in a movement which can bring about a change in the conditions of the working class. Let us remember that we have in this country now at this very moment thousands of active trade unionists, shop stewards and fellow members of our committees in the various factories who are not lacking in courage, who are not lacking in fighting quality, but who only lack the understanding of what to do and where to go, and it is our duty to give that to them and from these people we can build up a new movement, a movement which is keen, a movement which will fight on behalf of the working class, and which will really raise the challenge to the Government and so on.

Recently the engineering industry had a 10s. wage demand before the employers and got 5s., and I want to say at this Conference that the reason we got 5s. was because we haven't yet already created the fighting movement which will get what we want.

N. Frank (National Union of Public Employees): Our slogan must be that wages have to go up and the war has got to stop.

The more wages we earn, the more spending power we have, the less they will be able to spend for sending arms to Finland to be used against the Soviet Union.

H. Hodges (Amalgamated Union of Upholsterers): For the past number of years the upholsters' trade has gone down enormously owing to the way in which the wholesalers have been cutting down. A few years ago it used to be a good trade. We did not want a war to make matters worse. The only work we have had for the past year or two is work which the Government has found us for their own ends. Work like A.R.P. blind fixing.

We have got to see that our wives and children have a proper standard of living, and we have got to see that we fight fascism under a socialist government where there won't be unemployment like there is to-day.

Don Renton (National Unemployed Workers' Movement): The conditions of the industrial truce and the political truce entered into between the Trade Union bosses and the Labour Leaders and the Government has effected a situation in which it has become possible for the government to bring unceasing pressure upon one-and-a-half million workers to enter industry at rates far below those established by Trade Union custom.

During the past six months unemployment has increased by a quarter of a million. Here in the London area unemployment has doubled; in point of practical fact, London is being brought to the position which formerly was occupied by areas like South Wales, Durham, Cumberland and other districts like that, and, remember, comrades, that this tremendous increase in unemployment takes place at a time when two million people are engaged in armaments' production, when one-and-a-quarter are mobilised in the armed services. This represents for us the necessity at a conference of this character to take into account the degree to which those of us in the trade union movement, as part of our general struggle against war,

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against the government, against the industrial and political truce, will fight to bring forward those demands which can have the effect of reducing unemployment, through the elimination of overtime, shortening of the working week, beginning of a great rank-and-file movement through the building trades and so on

Esther Henrotte (Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, speaking in her personal capacity): In this war the Co-operative Movement, along with the Labour leaders, is supporting the Government. It has been drawn into supporting the Government's policy in keeping down the consumption of food.

I can say that the Government has been preparing to cut down the consumption of food for over two years. They have done very careful work in this respect. That is why they brought in the Co-operative Movement to help in this. A leader of the Co-operative Movement has been over to Finland. He did not go with the wishes of the thousands of co-operators of this country. He cannot now speak in the name of those co-operators and his actions will not receive the sanction of the people here. You will see an appeal for collections and tokens in order that money can be sent to Finland. Every co-operator should resist this and protest to the leadership of the Co-operative Movement.

J. R. Scott (Amalgamated Engineering Union): With the modern methods of calculations and measurements that go to make modern warfare, there are thousands of people in this country who are engaged on the manufacture of munitions in and around the engineering industry. In that industry to-day we can always talk in terms of well over one million employees, and there are thousands who are being controlled by the most anti-working class body, the Engineering Manufacturers' Federation. We want to get the backing of every worker outside engineering, because inside the engineering industry is the centre of the fight against the Government, against the engineering employers and for stopping the war.

If you remember at the end of 1918, when all the big wages demonstrations and meetings were being held, the few militants inside those meetings pressing for more wages and better conditions, turned those meetings into stop-the-war meetings,

That line of policy must proceed now —better wages, better working conditions, active trade union movement, and building up of a new shop stewards' movement based on the people in the factories. We must have a clear understanding, no pacifist talk, but militant struggle for better conditions, and so we can bring down not only the engineering employers, but the National Government as well.

W. Holt (Federation of Tenants and Residents' Associations): The conception of tenants organising against the landlord is not a new one; it occurred at the beginning of the first imperialist war, but there is a difference between the type of organisation then and the type of organisation that has been built up in recent years. Then a sporadic, spontaneous organisation was built up, winning what it wanted and falling away again, because there was no permanent and real political understanding running through the movement. To-day there is a real permanent organisation, a real fighting instrument of class struggle against the landlords and the building societies and against the Government, which has a real policy and a proper policy.

George Poole (Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers): It is up to everyone to work more inside the Trades Councils because inside these organisations we have many who are determined to fight the question of war. I believe that when we raise this question of the war inside the Trades Councils, we should demand from the Trades Councils that if the Labour Party Executive Committee will not conduct this campaign against the war, we should demand that they call a conference on their own.

George Crane (Amalgamated Engineering Union): Whilst, in general, it is true to say that the policy of Transport House has been (1) class collaboration; (2) support of an imperialistic war; and (3) industrial and political truce, it has not been accepted by the working class. The working class of Britain has not replied by resolutions alone; they have replied by organising in the last six months.

We must see, firstly, that we build the shop stewards' movement arising out of the struggles of the workers inside the factories. Help them to organise, and see that inside the factories there are representatives of every union—including the professional and clerical workers. Thus we would build forces which even Transport House could not split.

This question of the organisation of women is a serious one. We male workers in industry have got to get the women to appreciate the common struggle and help them to get into unions that will take them, help them to maintain their organisation, help them in formulating their demands and help them to win.

R. Page Arnot (LABOUR MONTHLY): The circulation of the LABOUR MONTHLY circulation had risen very rapidly indeed in the last few months. Ten years ago it was 2,500 copies a month. But then

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in the last five years steadily the circulation has gone up—5,000 in 1935, 5,400 in 1936, 6,500 in 1937, rising again in 1938, until in September of last year it was 7,000. Since then the figures went up like this: October, 8,800; November, 9,300; December, 10,500; January, 12,000. Finally, February, 1940, 15,500 met circulation. In six months the circulation had more than doubled.

This was a sign of that rapid awakening of political opinion, which is really a sign of the awakening to struggle.

Therefore the question I am putting before the Conference on behalf of the Editorial Board is how to develop the LABOUR MONTHLY's rôle of expressing in the new situation the gathering forces; how to get the circulation steadily rising at the same pace as the last five months, or a greater pace; and lastly, in connection with this, how to form the best concrete means by which the circulation can be increased rapidly—namely, by the formation of Readers' Groups.

The Editorial Board believes that this is something which can be taken up everywhere; by means of these groups studying the magazine each month there is the possibility that all those gathering forces can swiftly appreciate each change in the situation, and can be equipped each in his own organisation, each in his own locality to carry out the purposes of this Conference.

The Conference resolution referred back to the Basle resolution of 1912. Since the LABOUR MONTHLY was founded in July, 1921—in that new period that opened up after the last war and finally closed in the Autumn of last year—it had carried out the best traditions of that resolution. It had sought to equip the workers of this country with that understanding of things in the light of Marxism which opens the way of thought and action for solving all problems that lie before them.

* * *

Mr. Thompson also took the chair at the third and concluding session, when the principal speech was made by **William Gallacher, M.P.,** who declared that the whole movement can be strengthened by carrying the spirit and the letter of the Conference resolution into action throughout the country.

Obstacles could always be overcome. He remembered during the last war things were going very well on the Clyde. Every Saturday afternoon they had a shop stewards' meeting, with representatives of all the factories to the number of 350 to 400. Then in 1916 a lot were picked up and put into jail, and others deported. A year later, when they came back and tried to get the forces together, at the first Saturday afternoon meeting out of 400 they got only 7 shop stewards to attend. It wasn't much to start with. It did not look very bright, but with hard work, within a month or two they had the whole of the movement rallying once again, and stronger even than it had been before.

The shop stewards' movement, the trade union branches and trades councils needed to be built up, making them centres of working class activity. There should not be a trades council in the country that would give the slightest measure of support to Chamberlain and his Government.

The first shock of any attacks would fall on the most advanced expressions of working-class opinion. Some of the leaders will try to persuade the members that this is no concern of theirs; in some Union journals there are already incitements on the part of the leaders for such attacks to be made. They will tell trade unionists that it does not matter whether these organs representing advanced political opinions are attacked or not, it is not their business. Yet it is in fact vital to the whole working class movement. Two weeks ago in *Reynolds* we were told how in Germany, once the Communist Party was suppressed by the Nazis, the Social Democrats followed and the trade union movement and the Co-operative movement was soon destroyed.

In maintaining and building up the LABOUR MONTHLY, in helping to maintain every expression of working-class opinion, the trade unions and the Co-operative Movement were defending themselves from attack and from destruction. The liberties we have had to be fought for, and we have got to fight if we are going to retain them. We must retain them, not so that philosophical gentlemen may sit and discuss them, but as a means for gathering all our forces for the supreme task, the task of ending capitalism, with all its record of war, oppression and poverty and for the realisation of Socialism and peace for the peoples of the world.

Alderman Smith (Bermondsey): In times not far distant the burdens which the ruling class are placing on the workers to carry out its war will become so great that no amount of talk or propaganda will prevent the disillusionment of the workers and make them realise the real objects of the slaughter. It will be then that a redoubled struggle against the attacks on the workers, on the standards of life of the people, against the treacherous ruling class will arise. And it is our function to be the leadership of that struggle.

A. G. Papworth (Transport and General Workers' Union): At the present moment in London, we have

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1,700 buses withdrawn from the streets. The reason given for this withdrawal is the petrol shortage. My friends, you can see many private cars upon the streets of London that are using up the petrol that could be used for the common purpose of transporting passengers throughout the length and breadth of this city. I make no apology to the woman comrades here when I say that we passenger workers will fight tooth and nail against any "conductorettes" being introduced to dilute man labour. And when the necessity does arise that these "conductorettes" do come upon the job, we will demand equal pay for equal work.

Taking aside the transport angle, let me give you a little incident of a pal who has just come home from Spain. He was a member of a ship under convoy. They stopped at Barcelona, Tarragona, Alicante; they went to Lisbon and loaded further supplies. They arrived back here recently, docked at port and they commenced their unloading and the cargo was found to be a consignment of Sherries, Ports, Tarragonas and white wines. Comrades, we demand that, until such time as everybody is fed with the necessities there shall be no importation of luxuries.

Mrs. Atkins (Watford Co-operative Society): Remember your womenfolk—keep them militant within the ranks of the co-operators, which badly needs its militants. We have the situation to-day of a possible tremendous national appeal for help to be sent to Finland, and help for Finland means the destruction of Soviet citizens, the destruction of the workers of the U.S.S.R., and we who are active in the Co-operative Movement are determined to move heaven and hell that this should not happen. If all your wives are not co-operators then they should be. Get into the movement. When you are there, make yourselves felt within it.

Ben Francis (*Daily Worker*): Within the space of the next few months the question of industrial conscription is going to be a fact in this country.

A new proclamation will be issued shortly calling up men from 27 to 35. Alongside of this conscription of the man-power of the nation to act as cannon fodder, you will have the conscription of the men and women of this country. And therefore, steps have already been taken in order to ensure that the mass opposition which is arising throughout the country is curtailed and stifled if possible.

In concluding the proceedings, **R. Palme Dutt** declared that the Conference could justly be claimed as a landmark in the development of the Labour movement in this country in this war. Although not yet a National Conference, although based essentially on London and the Home Counties, it was nevertheless the most representative conference of all sections of the Labour Movement that had met since the outbreak of the war. It had been thrown open to every Labour, Trade Union, Co-operative or other working-class organisation ready to send delegates—with no Black Circulars. The Labour Party had not called any such conference in any part of the country. Mr. Attlee, Mr. Dalton and Sir Walter Citrine might note the result. This most representative conference yet called had unanimously adopted a resolution here against the war, against the line of betrayal for which they stand.

The resolution, as was made clear in the report of the Standing Orders Committee, was an expression of the opinions of the delegates who have come to this conference. There was no question of mandating delegates. Therefore now the first task was to report back to their organisations, to present to them the line of this resolution and of the discussions to-day and to see that every organisation here represented adopted this resolution and this policy. But that in itself is only the beginning. There were thousands more organisations that we want to reach. Although the success of this conference was an inspiration, let there be no illusions. In our fight we have so far only reached the vanguard. We have to reach out to the masses of the Labour movement, those in the Labour Party and the Trade Unions. Beyond that we have to reach out to the unorganised masses, remembering not only the men, but the women.

The experience of the last war showed that the regions where the most effective economic struggle developed, in the Clydeside, in South Wales, were not the regions where the hardships from the war were greatest, but where the regions where the political propaganda against the war had been most actively carried forward by the militant movement. Therefore, hand in hand with the basic task of propaganda, we need the development of the mass movement, the development of actual struggle.

The movement can and will go forward. We have before us May Day, the first May Day of war time, and we know great as were the May Days of the past years, how much it means now as the symbol of the whole international working-class struggle. We know the rôle of Liebknecht in May Day in Berlin in 1916.

In the spirit of what we have declared in this resolution we set ourselves to achieve the unity of the fighting ranks of the workers, temporarily confused by the new crisis of the war and through the betrayal of the leadership. We have to restore the independence and militancy

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of the Labour movement, to organise them in struggle. We shall not be defeated if the leaders fail but shall find fresh leaders and build new cadres. The working-class movement goes forward and will go forward to victory ; that is the spirit of our Conference.

The Conference endorsed a proposal by the Standing Orders Committee that the Organising Committee of the Conference should remain in being with a view to arranging regional conferences, a recall London conference and, if possible, a national conference.

READERS' DISCUSSION GROUPS

The attention of readers in North London is drawn to the meeting dates of the following Discussion Groups. The members of these Groups will welcome anyone who cares to attend.

Hampstead Garden Suburb :
34 Brookland Hill (Bus Route 58), 8 p.m. Monday, March 18th.

Church End, Finchley :
22 Windermere Avenue (via Mountfield Road or East End Road), 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 19th.

North Finchley :
21 Glenhurst Road, Friern Park (close to Tally Ho !), 8 p.m. Friday, March 15th.

BRADFORD.—Will readers and friends, interested in the formation of a " L.M." Discussion Group, please communicate with Charles Marshall, 13 Fairfield Road, Bradford, who will be pleased to supply further and more detailed information.

We shall be glad to have details of other Groups in order to make announcement of their meetings for the interest of our readers.

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The Workers' Counter-Offensive

BY PETER KERRIGAN

IN AN ARTICLE appearing on Saturday, February 3, entitled " How to Win the War," Captain Liddell Hart proceeded to prove to readers of the *Evening Standard* that the prospect was far from hopeful. As a matter of fact his conclusions, after examining this country's chances against Germany on sea, on land, and in the air and by economic pressure, can be summed up in his own words " the *dream* of victory"'

It is worth while referring to this Military Expert's opinions when considering the prospect facing the people of Britain on the Home Front. They not only shatter the illusions of those who expect a speedy victory through German collapse, but they underline the grim prospect before us, unless, in the words of Comrade Dimitrov, " the working class . . . . put an end to the war after its own fashion, in its own interest, in the interests of the whole of labouring mankind."

The chief Government spokesmen have stressed the prospect of a protracted war, and British Imperialism with this in view is taking all steps to ensure, in transforming British economic life to a war basis, that the burden will be put fully on the shoulders of the workers and lower middle classes. To do this they are organising all their forces and have launched the greatest offensive ever planned on wages and conditions of living of the working people of Britain.

There is not an aspect of the people's life which escapes attack—wages, savings, health services, building of houses, schools and hospitals, hours and labour conditions, labour transference, rationing, Old Age Pensions, Dependants' Allowances, transport services—and accompanying it all, the onslaught on democratic rights and liberties, with the threat to the Communist Party as the focal point of this offensive.

Here it is necessary to stress the point that the attack is, as yet, only in its initial stages, and hard as are the burdens which have already been thrust on our people, they are as nothing compared with what the ruling class have in store for us.

The official increase of 19 points in the cost of living up to the end of December meant a loss of 12½ per cent. or 2s. 6d. in the £ in real wages. Taken in conjunction with the fact that in the same period the 5,000,000 workers who got wage increases averaged only 3s. per head per week while approximately 9,000,000 received no increase at all, this gives a staggering picture of the first effects of the capitalist attack.

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As far back as November, 1939, Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared it was wrong to assume that, if prices rose, wages must go up. Chamberlain officially endorsed this as Government policy in his Mansion House speech on January 9, 1940, when he said: "It would be a great mistake to tie up wages to the cost of living."

Policy of the Employers

The employers have quickly taken their cue in all wage negotiations with the Unions. This was the argument used during protracted negotiations between the miners and the coalowners, which resulted in 1s. 1d. per shift advance and ended in a cost of living percentage being fixed which will leave miners increasingly worse off as the cost of living rises.

It was used again in the discussions with the Engineering Unions. Speaking on behalf of the "Merchants of Death," the engineering employers who are making stupendous profits from the war, Sir Alan Ramsay quoted the Mansion House speech as his counter to the men's just demand for a 10s. increase. The meeting adjourned until February 6, when the offer of 5s. was made, an offer that was accepted inside a few days by the Executives of the Unions in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Federation and then by the Amalgamated Engineering Union. The five shillings represents the rejection of the just demands of the engineers which were decided on before the war and subsequent increase in the cost of living. It represents the minimum wage concessions they have made to hold back the growing movement of revolt.

Similarly with the Railwaymen. Here the 4s. advance means in practice only 1s. for the lower-paid men who had received 3s. increase on the sliding scale and who lost this when the 4s. was granted, as well as losing the possibility of any further increases if the cost of living goes up in future. If the sliding scale for lower-paid men had still been retained, then they would be receiving 7s. per week increase instead of 4s. The award in many cases leaves railwaymen with a wage of 51s. to 54s. per week.

The meetings of shareholders of the Big Five in the Banking world were the occasion for continuing this line. On February 3, Lord Wardington, Chairman of Lloyds Bank, said: "Has anyone the right to say that he ought to be as well off in War as he is in Peace time?" Of course, it is clear that he was referring to the workers, because on the day he made the statement, shares which he holds in this bank had risen from 49s., the level at the beginning of the year, to 53s. A four shilling rise in one month (and this is the smallest increase of any of the Big Five) is a fitting commentary on his question.

In putting forward remedies to counteract the "dangerous tendency" for wages to follow increased prices, he proposed, among others, rationing, which, he pointed out, would curtail the possibility of excessive purchases. Another was "the payment of wages partly in cash and

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partly in the form of deferred loan certificates." The present experience of the workers with regard to rationing proves conclusively that rationing curtails purchases of necessities by the workers but has no effect at all on the excessive purchases of the rich. The other remedy is, of course, the same as that of the Tory economist, Keynes, who declared that compulsory savings would be as good as a ten per cent. cut in wages.

This shows the employers' line on wages, rationing and savings. They know that the workers' revolt is rapidly growing and at the same time they are preparing to press home further attacks. The main obstacle to these attacks, as it can be the instrument for a mighty counter-offensive by the workers, is the Trade Union Movement and its forms of workshop organisation and practice.

How can they render this powerful weapon ineffective? They can urge the workers to voluntarily surrender their power and at the same time, by constant propaganda, prepare to deprive them of it by force.

Churchill, the architect of intervention against the Soviet Union in 1918, is put up to make the call and give the pledge. " If Trade Unionists from patriotic or other international motives lay aside, for the duration of the war, any of the special craft usages which they have so carefully built up, they need have no fear that these will not be fully restored to them after the war is won." As Gallacher put it to his Clyde audience in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, the next day, " where have we heard that before? "

The Trade Union Leadership

They can also try to carry their line with the assistance of the Trade Union leadership. This assistance is exceptionally important for British Imperialism as it is dangerous for the mass membership of the Trade Unions and the working class generally.

During the last war there was complete co-operation between the Trade Union leadership and the Government with disastrous consequences which are still the subject of bitter memory by the rank and file. What is the position to-day? On the issue of the war the leadership is fully lined up, working night and day to bind the organised movement to the war chariot of Chamberlain. The most deadly and despicable aspect of their criminal actions lies in the way they are facilitating the war of intervention against the Socialist Fatherland, the Soviet Union. That is dealt with elsewhere in this issue. Here it is only necessary to draw attention to it because of its connection with their attitude on wages and conditions and economic rights. There is no escaping the fact, that the going over of the traitors to the camp of the class enemy on the international field also defines their position on the class front at home.

Of course, when it comes to the attack on wages, labour conditions, social life, etc., they adopt a different line from the one they take on the question of the Soviet Union, which is being attacked openly and continuously. Here they cover up their real intentions. In some cases

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they make declarations like that of Mr. Bevin, who, in the Union Journal, says the following :

> The Bankers and financiers are leading an attack upon the working classes with a view to working up a situation which will depress the standard of living. They will not rest until they have induced Parliament to introduce some form of conscription of Labour. . . . In a few weeks we shall in all probability find under Sir John Reith a great propaganda machine tuned in to achieve the Bankers' objective.

The fact is that the attack has already succeeded in depressing the workers' standards as we have already shown in this article. Nearly six months after the war starts Mr. Bevin discovers this attack. It is also interesting to note that it was through the policy of the Political Truce, to which Mr. Bevin is one of the principal parties, that Sir John Reith was returned unopposed as M.P. for Southampton so as to be in the position to conduct this campaign.

Many Trade Unionists are asking—especially Road Transport men, whose wage advances in Britain have only been 4s. since the war started—what Mr. Bevin's plans are for co-operation with the Government. In the *Daily Telegraph* on February 12, a columnist wrote of Mr. Bevin :

> While he is in general agreement with his Trades Union Congress colleagues on war policy, it is known that he has taken a critical line on some problems.
>
> His intensive work in reaching agreement after agreement for the benefit of the members of the Transport and General Workers' Union, who are in many trades, does not prevent him from making a close study of other affairs.
>
> An example of this is his project for economic unity of the Empire and the democracies. Another is his plan for dealing with the relations of Transport House and the Government.

The Press is continually carrying reports of plans for co-operation, while discussions and consultations are taking place all the time on new proposals for increased war effort such as the negotiations between Ernest Brown, Minister of Labour, and the Engineering Union officials on plans for a tremendous increase in production in Engineering. These plans are based on a further widespread giving up of Trade Union workshop practices and the sweeping of two million women into the maw of the industrial war machine at the same time.

What is behind all this discussion and planning ? Behind it all is the intensified preparation for further attacks on the workers. Behind it is the constant seeking for a formula which will be sufficiently elastic to cover this policy. Now it is carried a stage further by the attack on Trade Union democracy under the slogan of " Communist disruption in the Trade Unions " which is launched in the February monthly Journal of the Engineering Union by Fred Smith, the General Secretary. Significantly enough it is the *Daily Sketch*, Lord Kemsley's organ, which seizes on it first as part of the campaign against the Communists and those in the Labour and Trade Union Movement who are fighting

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to end the war.

Alongside these facts we require to note the proposal for the Rules Revision Conference of the Amalgamated Engineering Union in June this year that Communists will be debarred from holding any office in the Union. This is paralleled by a resolution of similar purpose appearing on the agenda of the Annual General Meeting of the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers. This Union has always been in the forefront for a generally progressive policy and such an effort reveals the nature of the attack.

Let anyone who doubts this consider the following facts. It is Tory economists like Keynes who are being consulted to help shape Labour's policy. Already the Government Savings Schemes have been blessed by all, from Bevin to the *Daily Herald* Editorial writer; Bevin makes a few reservations, but the Editorial writer makes no qualifications at all. They call for an extension of rationing, although our experience to date only reinforces the declaration of the spokesmen of the Government and Big Business that rationing is cutting down consumption for two-thirds of the population whose incomes average less than £5 per week. There is no danger at all of it affecting the other section, whose wealth has already made rationing of butter, bacon and coal farcical. Not for them the traffic in butter coupons to enable margarine to be bought, or the long queues with baths, go-chairs, prams and baskets at the coal depôts in Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester and London when women and children with cracked and bleeding lips stand blue from cold for the fuel which is so desperately needed at this moment. These queues are the writing on the wall for British Imperialism and for the leaders who have gone over to the other side.

Another significant fact relating to the Trade Union leaders' line is the attack which they have opened on all who oppose the official policy. Full-time Union officials are now threatened with disciplinary action for participating in the *Daily Worker* Conferences or speaking on platforms where a policy is put in opposition to that of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress. They are denied their rights as individuals to publicly declare where they stand. This policy is carried into the branches of the Unions, and in the case of the circular issued by the Executive Committee of the A.E.U. the fact that such Conferences dared to discuss questions of overtime and dilution is used as a reason for imposing a ban on the use of branch funds to send delegates and a warning is uttered against delegates going.

The Workers' Counter-Offensive

These measures may please the capitalist associates of the Trade Union leaders, but they will not be able to stifle the growing revolt among the workers. The response to the Communist Party Manifesto of January 24, which expressed the demands of the working people of Britain in an eight-point programme, has been widespread and deep.

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It is important to reproduce this eight-point programme:

1. Wage increases to meet rising prices.
2. Immediate and adequate increased allowances for dependants of men in the forces.
3. Re-starting essential health services, house, school and hospital building.
4. Increased benefits for the unemployed, and £1 a week for old age pensioners.
5. No abrogation of existing Factory Acts.
6. Control of overtime.
7. Adequate safeguards and health protection for women and youth in industry.
8. Tax the rich to pay for the rich men's war.

Reports of activities throughout Britain in support of this programme show how strong is the feeling generated in this, the first stages of the campaign to develop the Workers' Counter-Offensive. It is clear already that International Women's Day demonstrations on March 8 to 10 with their emphasis on the increasingly important rôle of women in industry and the war will mark a further phase in this movement. May 1, this year, will have a significance and character for industrial workers that can only be compared to the highlights of certain May Days on the Clyde and elsewhere during the last war, provided the movement develops as it has begun.

This is important because it leaves no doubt about the way this movement is developing. February 4 was *preceded* by bans on overtime on the Tyne and the Clyde and in Sheffield, with local strikes on questions such as heating arrangements during the cold weather in Engineering shops on the Clyde and elsewhere. Continuous discussions and factory meetings have been taking place on a scale much bigger than on any previous occasion and the one-day strike of the Napier Aircraft workers against the delay in granting the 10s. increase was the highlight in a whole series of actions of protest which took various forms. In one aircraft factory the shop stewards were asked to arrange a meeting on Saturday morning during working hours to hear a speaker boosting the Government savings scheme. In spite of all efforts and the knowledge that they would be paid for the time taken up in attending the meeting, back came the prompt reply of the workers—they would not attend such a meeting. What they were interested in was the failure to pay them the 10s. increase, and no meeting was held.

These actions are going on in spite of the incessant propaganda trying to whip up enthusiasm for the war. Another feature of the movement is the way the experiences of the last war are being discussed with a view to finding the best means of developing the fight for the workers' demands. The changes in industry, as in building where men are out on camp jobs, have raised problems of trade union branch and job organisation. In many other instances workers are already discussing

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and considering the best forms of organisation or what adaptations are necessary to maintain and improve the existing Trade Union and factory machinery. It is clear, however, that the shop stewards' factory and job committees will be the tested core of the workers' counter-offensive, with greater co-ordination existing between them and the branches and district committees of the Unions than operated in the last war.

The Fight in Industry and the Fight to End the War

In drawing attention to these facts it is very necessary to understand the depth of feeling existing among the womenfolk. It does not matter whether it is the women in industry or the wives of workers, or the ever-growing army of wives and mothers of men in the armed forces, they are all in their various ways reacting strongly against the terrible conditions of life in this war.

It is here necessary to develop a point which is fundamental for the success of the workers' movements and applies not only to the women but to the whole of the toiling masses who are affected by this war. It would be fatal to try and develop this movement by concentration on the issues already mentioned or the many others not dealt with while at the same time trying to shut this fight off from the fight to end the war. This struggle, if it is to amount to anything at all, is not an alternative to the campaign against the war, but takes its place in the general fight. Just because of the importance of the fight on these Home Front issues, it is essential that the campaign of explanation of the character of the war and of the intervention against the Soviet Union should be intensified simultaneously as the campaign on the wages issue is developed. An understanding of this point is the key to success in the struggle for wages and in defence of the workers' living standards.

This also raises the issue of defence of the democratic rights of the British People. Because of their need to hold back the movement and at the same time worsen the workers' standards, the bourgeoisie resorts more and more to totalitarian methods in industry and in relation to the liberties of the people. Already the campaign has been launched against the Communist Party. Sir Walter Citrine during his visit to Finland is reported to have declared that "the Communist M.P. would not be long in Parliament." At the same time, Lord Kemsley, through his paper the *Sunday Dispatch*, launches the demand for the suppression of the Communist Party, the Peace Movement and others who oppose the war.

The attack on the Communists is not a question of a particular Party —it is the attack on the working class as a whole. In Germany the Communists were first attacked and then the workers generally. In France, the Communist Party is suppressed and then the conditions of the French workers incredibly worsened. If we permit it, they will follow the same policy here.

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The British workers have always been best when fighting for such questions and when this is so closely related to the fight for the very necessities of life they will excel themselves. If the advanced section of the Movement can see this campaign in a really big way, if they can, as I believe they will, see it as a continuously developing and growing struggle which, as it progresses, challenges the very basis of this capitalist system in Britain, then we will launch such a movement as will stagger our enemies. It will be a movement which, as it swells and expands, will shatter this rotten system of monopoly capitalism and on its ruins build the new Socialist order which must come out of our success in ending the war and " creating the conditions for the abolition of the fundamental causes of Imperialist Wars."

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March 18: The Paris Commune

A LETTER OF ELEANOR MARX

The Eighteenth of March is the anniversary of the Paris Commune, the day in 1871 when the working men of France's capital took power into their hands, the first time in history that working-class revolution triumphed. To the working class of Daladier's France, and to the labour movement in all countries, the anniversary this year will have a new and special significance.

That significance is discussed below; but first THE LABOUR MONTHLY *presents an unpublished Marxist document on the Commune of high interest. It is a letter written by Eleanor Marx in 1893 to be read at a Commune anniversary meeting in Aberdeen, organised by the local Socialist Society. For its publication now, thanks are due to Mr. William Diack, a respected veteran of the Aberdeen movement (and its able historian), to whom it was originally addressed, and who was good enough to let me make a copy of it.*

No further introduction is necessary to this simple and moving letter from Marx's favourite and most talented daughter.

7 GRAY'S INN SQUARE, W.C.
17th March, 1893.

DEAR COMRADES,—It is 22 years to-morrow since the Commune was proclaimed. Many are the meetings that have been held since then to commemorate the event, and to do honour to the memory of the devoted and heroic men and women of Paris. To-day the holding of " Commune meetings " is quite a matter of course. But 21 years ago when the first anniversary meeting was to be held things were very different. No doubt few of you remember that time, or the condition of perfectly frantic fury of the whole middle class against the Commune. To many of you it will seem strange when I remind you that it was proposed—quite seriously—that the Communards who had taken refuge in England should be handed over to the doctors and the hospitals for purposes of vivisection. Perhaps exceptionally brutal in form, this proposition nevertheless largely expressed the feelings of the whole of respectable society. Saddest of all is the fact that in England the workers also, with rare exceptions (just as there were some middle-class exceptions among the Comtists*) were as bitterly hostile to the

*A reference to the Positivist Society, followers of Auguste Comte, among whose most prominent members were Professor E. S. Beesly and Frederick Harrison, both defenders of the Commune.

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Commune as their exploiters. And so it was but a small knot of English men and women who on that first anniversary came to meet the "foreigners"—most of these persons escaped from Paris—and to celebrate the memory of the Commune. But that meeting never came off at all. When we got to the Hall we found it closed against us. The landlord preferred to return the deposit, and to pay a penalty for breach of contract, to allowing such a set of "ruffians" in his highly respectable Hall. Then the said ruffians, or at least a large number of them, adjourned to a modest inn, and sat down together to an improvised—and not luxurious—supper. And despite the tragic horrors of that terrible year; despite the fact that most of these men and women had passed through deadly peril, that they were miserably poor, exiled, not a few suffering from still unhealed wounds; that there was hardly one among us who had not lost some near and dear to us, or—worse still—who had not some dear friend, who had not father or mother, sister or brother or child rotting in the horrible pontoons or on the awful plain of Satory*; despite all this we were a merry party. In the midst of so much suffering, immediately after this overwhelming defeat, these men and women were gay with the gaiety of perfect Faith. In the darkest hour they never doubted, they never hesitated. They *knew* the clouds would lift, they knew surely that the sun, if hidden, was yet there and would shine out again triumphant. Alas! To many the hour of triumph was never to come, never even some small sign that it was approaching. Of all that goodly company few are left now. Yet through the long years of waiting and of exile they did not lose heart. If not themselves, then their children or their children's children . . . .

While all the world—in England even the working-class world—was thus against the Commune, one great organisation stood by the revolutionists, holding aloft the red flag. That organisation was the "International Working Men's Association." In Spain, in Italy, in Belgium, in Switzerland, its members went to prison for expressing their sympathy with the Commune; in Germany not only were they sent to prison, but when Moltke made a triumphal entry into Berlin, the workers received him with cries of "Long Live the Commune" and were charged and dispersed by cavalry. In England certainly many members withdrew from the Association, but some remained faithful through all, even after the General Council had issued its now world-famous pamphlet on "The Civil War in France."

This pamphlet, like nearly all the publications of the "International," was written by my Father, and is unquestionably the most valuable contribution to the literature of the Commune. To the brilliancy of its style even the reactionary press bore witness, although they did

*Pontoons—prison hulks pressed into service for arrested Communards; between June and September, 1871, some 20,000 were crammed into 25 of these floating hells. Satory, near Versailles, was the French Aldershot; thousands of Communard prisoners, mainly women, were herded on to an open parade-ground where they "lived" in sun and rain, sleeping in the mud, jeered at over the walls by the Versailles swells; close by the firing squads were ceaselessly at work.

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call its author " infamous," and many demanded a State prosecution. It was then that my Father publicly acknowledged himself as the author, though it was, of course, signed by the " Council." If the reactionary press admitted the literary excellence of the work, the Communards declared it to be a clear expression of what the Commune really meant, and had put clearly even to themselves, what they had only felt vaguely. " You have told us what we really meant," said one of the noblest members of the Commune, the heroic Ranvier*, to Karl Marx.

Of this pamphlet few copies are in existence, and none can be obtained.† I still possess three copies, and one of these I am sending you, dear Comrades, for the Aberdeen Socialist Society.‡ You will, I know, value it for its own sake and for its associations—for it is one of my Father's own copies. But while this pamphlet will tell you the true meaning of the revolution of the 18th March, and will remind you of the unparalleled heroism of its defenders, there is one thing this pamphlet cannot tell you—for it was written in 1871. And that is the way these men and women lived—that, almost without exception, the after lives of these Communards were worthy of their cause. To fight heroically is much; but after all most of us would probably do the same under like circumstances. But how many are there who can be heroic not for a day, an hour, but every hour, of every day, in the long weary years ? Yet these people bore exile and hunger and privation, disappointment and the agony of hope deferred, without faltering or failing. All honor to their memory ! In the concluding words of that work I am sending you—words written by Karl Marx, the 10th anniversary of whose own death is on March 14—" Working men's Paris with its Commune will be for ever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them."

Yours fraternally,

ELEANOR MARX AVELING.

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*Gabriel Ranvier, porcelain painter, member of the Commune from the XXth *arrondissement* (Belleville, the working-class district in the east end of Paris, of which he had been mayor) and member of the Commune's Committee of Public Safety. It was he who formally proclaimed the Commune at the great parade on March 28, 1871, and he who organised the heroic last stand in Belleville, issuing the Commune's final proclamation on May 26. Escaping to London, he lived, like many other Communard refugees, in Clerkenwell.

†Eleanor Marx is referring, of course, to the original edition (London, Truelove, 1871). Two years after she wrote, the " Civil War in France " was reprinted for the first time as an appendix to Belfort Bax's *Short History of the Paris Commune* (London, Twentieth Century Press, 1895). It is currently available in the standard Marxist-Leninist Library published by Lawrence and Wishart.

‡A couple of months before this Eleanor Marx had paid a propaganda visit to Aberdeen and, to judge from subsequent letters, was deeply touched by the warmth of the response she evoked (William Diack : *History of the Trades Council and the Trade Union Movement in Aberdeen*, pp. 61-64).

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It is nearly half a century since these words were written; the Commune anniversary this year has even more meaning when it is remembered what has happened in France since September, 1939. And there is something peculiarly apposite in the motion adopted unanimously by Daladier's Reichstag, Blum and the "Socialist" deputies not lagging behind, on February 10.

"The Chamber," it read, "at the end of a debate marked by a lofty sentiment of patriotism, pays tribute to the efforts that the Government have unceasingly made to raise our material and moral forces to the level of our army's heroism; trusts them to pursue that effort . . . . and thus carry on the war to a victorious conclusion."

1871-1940! *Let the reader consider these excerpts from Lenin's address on the Lessons of the Commune at a meeting in Geneva in March, 1908.*

"The proletariat which rose against the old régime took upon itself two tasks: a general national, and a class task—the liberation of France from the German invasion, and the Socialist liberation of the workers from capitalism. This combination of two tasks is the most original feature of the Commune. The bourgeoisie had established the 'Government of National Defence,' and the proletariat had to fight under its leadership for national independence. In reality this was a government of 'national betrayal' ordained, as it thought, to fight the Paris proletariat. But the proletariat did not realise this, for it was blinded by patriotic illusions. The patriotic idea had its origin in the Great Revolution of the eighteenth century; the minds of the Socialists of the Commune were under its spell . . . .

"It is this combination of contradictory tasks—patriotism and Socialism—which constituted the fatal error of the French Socialists. Already in the Manifesto of the International in September, 1870, Marx warned the French proletariat not to be carried away by the false national idea: profound changes had taken place since the time of the Great Revolution, class differences had become more acute, and although at that time the struggle against the reaction of the whole of Europe united the whole revolutionary nation, the proletariat of the present time can no longer unite its interests with the interests of other classes hostile to it; let the bourgeoisie bear the responsibility for the national humiliation—it is the business of the proletariat to fight for the Socialist liberation of labour from the yoke of the bourgeoisie."

In estimating the historical significance of the Commune, Lenin specially stressed that "it dispersed patriotic illusions and shattered the naïve faith in the common national aspirations of the bourgeoisie." "The Commune has taught the European proletariat to deal concretely with the problems of the Socialist revolution."

ALLEN HUTT

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War Aims—Lessons of 1914-18

BY R. B. EASTWOOD

"EVERYBODY" IS BUSY playing the fashionable game of "War Aims and Peace Aims." Large books, "Penguins," pamphlets, declarations, manifestoes, appeals to the Government, appeals to the People, follow each other off the Press at a giddy pace. Cole and Laski for the "Socialists," Layton, Angell and Wickham Steed for the Liberals, W. B. Curry for the educationalists, Lancelot Hogben for the scientists, the Archbishop of York for the clerics, and even Lord Lothian for the "Cliveden Set," have each put forward their schemes, and the whole has been crowned by official declarations on behalf of His Majesty's Government and His Majesty's Labour Party. This growing pile of pronouncements is for the most part exceedingly boring, consisting either of stale and tedious generalities, or else of elaborate and schematic "blue-prints for the future Europe," worked out with a wealth of minute and quite unreadable detail.

There is a danger that the complete Utopianism and apparent irrelevance of these various schemes may serve to obscure the fact that the whole of this War Aims controversy actually performs a vital function as part of the imperialist war machine. That this is so can best be shown by examining the evidence of 1914-1918.

During the first three years of the last war there was no animated War Aims controversy such as there is to-day. The whole official atmosphere was entirely different. Any discussion of ultimate objectives or of possible peace terms was severely discouraged, and all public speakers were expected to talk only of the need for crushing Germany and achieving a smashing victory. The general tone of Government propaganda from 1914 to 1917 can well be sensed from Lloyd George's celebrated recruiting speech of September 29, 1916, in which he said that:

> Britain is not prepared to stop the war because of the squealing done by Germans or done for Germans. We must fight to a finish, to a knock-out blow. The enemy is whimpering and whining. With regard to the duration of the War, there is neither clock nor calendar in the British Army to-day.

Such a statement from a Cabinet Minister to-day would be regarded as in the worst possible taste, and the contrast between this exultant jingoism and the suave humanitarianism of Lord Halifax's broadcasts is glaringly obvious. This same contrast is shown by the deliberate suppression of Lord Lansdowne's celebrated "Peace Aims" letter

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when it was first written in the autumn of 1916, and the fact that exactly similar letters by equally respectable peers are now being published daily in the correspondence columns of the *Times* and *Daily Telegraph*.

In fact this contrast is so obvious that many Labour and Liberal publicists profess to see in it a decisive reason why everyone should agree with them in supporting this war which, they claim, is quite different from the last one. The absence of irresponsible chauvinism and the universal preoccupation with the need for a just peace are all guarantees, so we are told, that the Government has at last learnt its lesson from the follies of 1914, and that consequently there is now no danger that an Allied victory will lead to a repetition of an imperialist Versailles.

These arguments would be more convincing were it not for the way in which they carefully ignore half of the evidence. There is certainly a sharp contrast between Government propaganda to-day and Government propaganda at the *beginning* of the last war. But this is only true of 1914-17. At the end of 1917 there was a sudden and decisive change; discussion of War Aims, and planning for the " New Europe " suddenly became fashionable, and Allied pronouncements—especially of course those of President Wilson—became filled with that idealist internationalism of which we hear so much to-day.

It is important that we should understand what it was that caused this sudden switch-over of Government propaganda during the course of the last war.

The earlier Government refusal to encourage a discussion of War Aims was perfectly intelligible, for there were obvious reasons why such a discussion might prove a source of embarrassment to an imperialist power. The real annexationist war aims of the Allies could, of course, not be disclosed, and any open discussion would certainly have led to unfortunate quarrels between the various Allies as to the eventual share-out of the spoils of victory. As the war continued and as more and more neutrals were drawn in on the Allied side, these considerations became all the more pressing, and it is significant that the Americans themselves (the special champions of " open diplomacy ") were the first to realise when they entered the war, the need for a discreet silence on the whole subject of War Aims. Within three weeks of America's declaration of war we find Col. House writing to warn President Wilson (April 23, 1917):

> I hope you will agree with me that the best policy now is to avoid a discussion of peace settlements. Balfour concurs in this. If the Allies begin to discuss terms among themselves, they will soon hate one another worse than they do Germany. (*Wilson's Life and Letters*. Vol. VII. p. 33).

We thus see that right up to the summer of 1917 the policy of the Allied Governments was to stifle any consideration of War Aims; and yet we know that only nine months later—from January, 1918,

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onwards—these same Governments, with Wilson's "14 Points" as their starting point, were all busy whipping up a frenzied public discussion on this very subject. What was responsible for this sudden change? All the arguments which counselled silence still operated with continued force; what was the new factor whose influence was so decisive as to demand a complete reversal of policy? It was the Russian Revolution.

The outbreak of the Russian Revolution of March, 1917, and the overthrow of Tsardom came as a profound shock to a war-wracked world. To the imperialists it gave the first grim warning of the forces of revolution slowly developing beneath the crumbling surface of their own bankrupt rule; to the people it was a clarion-call to rise and demand an end to the ceaseless slaughter of the battlefields. The effect was immediate.

In France, regiment after regiment, already decimated by the horror of the Nivelle offensives, refused to obey their officers and demanded immediate peace. By the middle of June, Pétain had to report that 50 per cent. of the front-line troops could no longer be regarded as reliable.

In England the situation was not much better. It was at this time that Lord Esher was forced to write (*Journals*, Vol. IV., May 19, 1917) that the Secretary of State for War was

> excited and pessimistic over affairs in England. The food supplies, man-power and strikes worry him. The spectre of revolution stands behind his chair.

But if all this was the direct result of the tentative and provisional Peace Appeal which followed the March Revolution, how much stronger was to be the effect six months later when the Bolsheviks translated this Peace Appeal into action, withdrew Russia from the war, and immediately published to the whole world the Secret Treaties which bound the imperialist powers.

The Allied Governments were faced with a desperate situation. If they did not act quickly their war-weary populations might follow the Russian lead and put an end to the war after their own fashion. Some new appeal was essential in order to rekindle enthusiasm for the war, and in order to divert attention from the Bolshevik example. Allied statesmen adapted themselves to this new situation with remarkable speed. Emphasis on patriotic and jingoistic slogans was now toned down, and their place was taken by copious references to international brotherhood, a "League of Nations," and the fight for a "new Europe." Those statesmen who had previously regarded any mention of Peace Aims as bordering on defeatism, now actively participated in public discussion on this very subject.

The most striking example of this change of front was shown by the fate of the Lansdowne letter, which, having lain unused for over a year, was suddenly published by the *Daily Telegraph* on November 29, 1917, less than a week after the Bolshevik publication of the Secret Treaties.

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In 1916 it had been regarded as a highly dangerous document, quite unsuitable for publication, but by November, 1917, so potent was the influence of the Russian Revolution, that the authorities judged it essential to make use of such pacifist propaganda in order to retain the allegiance of liberal and labour opinion. That they judged rightly can be guaged by the effect of the letter on C. E. Montague, a typical young liberal soldier, who wrote back from the front line :

> A good declaration of war-aims, likely to be approved by soldiers here, and useful towards victory. (J. L. Hammond, *Life of C. P. Scott*).

We see therefore that " pacifist " War Aims declarations had now become an essential weapon in the armoury of the imperialist powers in their efforts to whip up a desire for victory.

Of course, by far the most important of these new " liberal " propaganda-weapons was " Wilsonism." After three years of carnage men would only continue to fight if given a faith that they were really fighting for a better world. " Wilsonism," enshrined in the " 14 Points," gave them that faith, and thus alone made possible a fourth year of imperialist slaughter.

That the primary object of Wilson's " 14 Points " was to combat the influence of Bolshevik propaganda on the Allied populations is openly admitted by Lloyd George, who, in his book on the Peace Treaties, states that :

> The attitude of the Workers' Government in Russia was having a very disturbing effect on the artisans in our workshops. . . . The constant and insidious circulation of statements in the workshop was affecting the minds of the industrial population and interfering seriously with the output of essential war material and equipment. . . . It was therefore deemed desirable to make a full carefully prepared and authentic statement of Allied War Aims so as to reassure the public. (Vol. I., p. 66-7).

Of course, the choice of President Wilson to make this " full and authentic statement " on behalf of the Allied Governments was quite deliberate. After the Bolshevik publication of the Secret Treaties had seriously discredited the motives of all the European politicians, Wilson alone was able to come forward as the high-minded idealist, untouched by the sordid intrigues of Old World diplomacy. Those who had lost all confidence in their own war governments now took fresh heart to feel that the great democrat from across the water had stepped in and lifted the Allied cause on to a higher and more spiritual plane. (We should note in passing that certain Allied politicians are already hoping that President Roosevelt will be able to do them a similar service this time).

Wilson's idealistic pronouncements fulfilled their counter-revolutionary purpose with remarkable success, and were able to carry the Allied imperialists through the most critical months of the war. Their gratitude for this assistance—every bit as useful as American men and munitions—has been expressed appropriately enough by Sir William Wiseman, of the British Intelligence Service, who wrote that :

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> One of the greatest services Wilson rendered to the Allied cause was his appeal to the liberal-minded people of all countries, who naturally recoiled from the horror of war. Wilson made them feel that it was a necessary, although terrible, undertaking, and there is no doubt that there would have been more trouble among the so-called pacifists had it not been for Wilson's influence. (*House Papers*. Vol. III., p. 131).

Winston Churchill has characterised the counter-revolutionary function of Wilsonism more bluntly in saying that:

> His words had carried comfort to every Allied people, and had been most helpful in silencing subversive peace propaganda in all its forms. (*The Aftermath*, p. 104).

This signal success of the " 14 Points " in rekindling enthusiasm for imperialist war is in direct contrast to their abyssmal failure to have any influence on the final terms of peace. Once Wilson's idealistic War Aims had successfully duped the Allied peoples, they were discarded without more ado to give place once more to the basic realities of imperialist power-politics. In fact it is now clear that the whole of the 1918 Peace Aims controversy served the Government as nothing more than a gigantic and highly successful manœuvre, whose sole function was to befog the hard-tried Allied peoples into continuing support for an imperialist war of which they had long grown weary.

It is very important to notice the part played by the liberal and labour leaders in this Wilsonian War Aims ramp. Without their co-operation the plan could not possibly have succeeded, for if their representatives had given them a clear lead, the Allied populations would soon have seen through the Government manœuvres.

These so-called leaders did not simply adopt the passive rôle of swallowing the Government War Aims propaganda without question; they actively participated in the task of concocting the propaganda itself, and took on the special responsibility for seeing that it was served up in the form that would best appeal to their followers. They were the first to realise the effect of the Russian Revolution on the Allied workers, and they quickly warned their Governments of the need for some counter-attraction in the form of plausible War Aims declarations.

For example, Alexandre Ribot, then Prime Minister of France, reports (*Journals*, p. 128) how on May 22, 1917, Renaudel, the Socialist leader, came to him and implored him to stage a debate in the Chamber on the subject of War Aims, as this was the only method of checking " serious disturbances " in the army and in the country at large. Similarly Poincaré, the French President, has described (*Au Service de la France*, Vol. 9, p. 203) a French Cabinet meeting which was held on July 17, 1917, in order to deal with the serious danger that the Socialist Party might withdraw its support from the Government. After a variety of proposals had been discussed without result, Albert Thomas, the " Socialist " Minister of Munitions, came forward with the clever idea that the cheapest way to regain the faith of his party was to send a message to President Wilson asking him to make a speech

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giving a clear statement of Peace Aims and if possible bringing in a reference to a League of Nations. This expert suggestion was immediately accepted by the Cabinet, and thus set going the diplomatic exchanges which ultimately culminated in the " 14 Points."

At the same time as they were thus advising their Governments as to the best way of deluding their war-weary followers, it was equally necessary for the Labour leaders to carry on their own War Aims discussion " independently " of the Government, thereby making it possible for them to claim at a later stage that they had persuaded the Government to " take over Labour's own ideals." They did this in England with particular success.

Throughout the earlier years of the war Labour Party Conferences tactfully kept off the subject of Peace Aims in order not to embarrass the Government. In fact when it was suggested that such a discussion should take place at an Allied Socialist Congress to be held in Paris in the spring of 1917, the Labour Party refused to participate. But as soon as the Russian Revolution took place a different tune became necessary, and the Labour Party and the Trade Unions immediately set up in September, 1917, a Joint Committee to elaborate a programme of Peace Aims. This Committee reported on December 28, 1917, just 10 days prior to the declaration of Wilson's " 14 Points." This happy coincidence made it possible for the Annual Labour Party Conference, which met a fortnight later, to claim that the President's speech had incorporated nine-tenths of the Socialist programme, and had at last turned the war into a real People's Crusade.

It was this Conference which issued the Labour Party's own picture of the " new Europe," in the form of the celebrated manifesto " Labour and the New Social Order." Just as Wilson's " 14 Points " were later discarded after they had successfully performed their counter-revolutionary task, so was this brave Labour Party outburst later discarded to be replaced by the more soberly worded " Labour and the Nation."

The grim reality behind these pious manifestoes was shown by the experience of January 5, 1918, when, at a Conference in the Caxton Hall, in return for a high-flown declaration of Peace Aims by Lloyd George himself, the Trade Union leaders gave the Government permission to remove the dilution safeguards of the 1915 Treasury Agreement, and thereby dealt the engineering workers a blow from which they have never wholly recovered.*

*The completely cynical nature of this imperialist bargain with the Trade Union leaders is strikingly illustrated by the reaction of the British Ambassador in Paris. When he first read Lloyd George's declaration he was a trifle apprehensive and wrote in his diary :

> I suppose the P.M. *had*, in order to support the Labour Party, to say that the fate of the captured German colonies must be decided by the Peace Conference. (*Diary of Lord Bertie of Thame*, Vol. II., p. 241.)

But a moment's reflection soon reminded the old diplomatist that all such declarations were merely so much eye-wash, and he reassuringly noted that, of course, " all sorts of reasons may be found when the time comes for not returning the colonies to Germany." So much for the " undertakings " which the Trade Union leaders claimed to have extracted in return for increased working-class sacrifices.

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In this Caxton Hall meeting we have epitomized the real significance of the Peace Aims controversy. On the one side, increased sacrifices for the working-class and continued support for imperialist slaughter. On the other side, pious declarations which are immediately repudiated so soon as their task of deception has been completed.

As in 1917, so in 1939; but with one big difference. During the last war it was only after three long years of carnage that the working class was strong enough to throw the imperialists on to the defensive and to compel them to rely on the War Aims manœuvre in order to rally their wavering supporters. This time they are compelled to adopt this expedient from the very first day of the conflict, and we can take this as an unwitting tribute to the strength of public opposition to imperialist war.

In 1917, outside Russia, the revolutionary working class was still weak and un-led, and consequently the Wilsonian manœuvre was successful in giving imperialism a further lease of life. To-day, the revolutionary working class has been strengthened by the experience of 20 years' struggle, it is led by compact Communist parties in all the belligerent countries, and it is inspired by a Russian example now a thousand times stronger. Faced with the same task, it can this time be successful, for if we are able to expose to the people the real function of the War Aims swindle, we will have taken an important step towards fatally undermining the whole fabric of imperialist rule.

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Roosevelt Heads for War

BY GEORGE SELDES

RARELY IN THE history of the modern world has a people witnessed such an astonishing, disgraceful and disheartening spectacle as that played by the present Administration in Washington, and still more rarely has there been such an example of cowardice, betrayal and surrender as that exhibited by Franklin Delano Roosevelt who, less than six months ago, was still ranked by many with Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln in greatness. The facts are evident, but explanations vary.

Until the other day, when John L. Lewis, head of the United Mine Workers and also of the C.I.O., denounced the President and asked his 4,000,000 followers to do likewise, it was not apparent even to the small minority who have always doubted the Bourbon-reformer that the betrayal of the people by their leader was suspected by any large part of the population ; but the convention of the United Mine Workers late in January was indeed an eye-opener. While resolutions were being put forward to endorse the President for a third term, Mr. Lewis arose and denounced him as an enemy of labour and predicted that if he made a third campaign it would end in a disgraceful defeat. What he meant of course was that labour would help to make it disgraceful.

It was just one year to a day that the same John L. Lewis, addressing the same annual convention of the miners, had said : " Franklin Delano Roosevelt is the only President in our lifetime who has tried to give the common people a square deal." Within one year the President therefore has passed from labour's greatest friend to one of its greatest enemies.

Under these circumstances, naturally, there has been a widespread revaluation of the career of the first President since Abraham Lincoln whose oratory seemed to indicate a concern with the people, the working people of the nation. The experience is a revealing one.

First there was the N.R.A. under which labour could organise freely and employers were asked to formulate fair codes. All the codes were forced upon the employers until, in 1935, the President double-crossed the American Newspaper Guild which had attempted to obtain a code similar to all others from the publishers. The President surrendered to the publishers because, as a politician, he could not offend the main organ of manufacturing public opinion.

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The most serious political scandal of the time was the Fascist régime in Jersey City, the most purely Hitlerian of our cities, where the political grafters made millions of dollars in vice and crime and denied labour its rights under the Constitution. C.I.O. organisers were refused permission to visit the city, and when they did come they were deported by force. Riots occurred. As the result of lawsuits the Supreme Court decided against Mayor Frank Hague, but throughout these years the President did nothing. He even refused to speak against Hague. Hague is vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee, a political boss who controls several hundred thousand votes which Mr. Roosevelt needs badly.

In the Spanish war the President declared for neutrality, but neutrality meant complicity in the murder of a democratic Republic.

In the last three years we have from time to time protested against the plans of the administration to curtail, sabotage or end its various activities which provided work for writers, dramatists, actors, poets, painters, which had previously treated intellectuals as human beings and no worse than other workers. We have always realised that among reactionaries (and patently among Fascists) there is a great fear of culture, a passion for obscurantism, which has not been seen since the Dark Ages. Mr. Roosevelt for years defied the ignorant and vicious men who dominate our small politics, but to-day we find him joined with them in diverting national funds from culture to battleships.

Look at the proposed budget : almost every item from the enormous national defence fund to veterans' payments and the governmental establishments is up, and at the expense of public welfare :

	1939	1940	1941
National Defence	1,056,000,000	1,457,000,000	1,834,000,000
Public Works	1,111,000,000	1,182,000,000	789,000,000
P.W.A., C.C.C., N.Y.A., etc.	2,677,000,000	1,912,000,000	1,364,000,000

The P.W.A. is the Public Works Administration, which has given employment to hundreds of thousands of men and which is reshaping the face of the nation. From one end of the country to the other you see now new school buildings, new roads, new hospitals, new civilian airfields, which the P.W.A. has built. The C.C.C. is the Civilian Conservation Corps, which has taken several hundreds of thousands of boys from the slums and made useful citizens out of them instead of potential gangsters. The N.Y.A. is the National Youth Administration, one of the greatest and most humanitarian activities ever attempted by a political administration.

The " savings " on culture and progress are to go into battleships. To fight whom, may we ask, Mr. President ? Not Japan, for that is impossible, to quote no less an authority than a recent secretary of the navy named Franklin Delano Roosevelt. To fight Germany ? Surely not. And surely not to fight your chosen Allies, Britain, France and Finland ? Whom are you building a navy against, Mr. President ?

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Russia, perhaps ?

More and more it becomes clear that Roosevelt is like Wilson, keeping us out of war in order to lead us into war when the mass hysteria has reached the right pitch. Armament races lead to war. We have an armament race. War machines themselves make war, and we are building a great machine. And no war machine in history has ever been created without being used, Mr. President, as all military experts will tell you, because these things are axioms and history.

Housing, health, education, cultural and material progress must now be wiped from the programme of the New Deal, so that the old deal, the armaments race deal, can go on.

Nor is that all. After the budget speech there was the Jackson Day banquet, where the President jumped off—not from the train of history, but from the liberal band-wagon. He remained faithful to Jefferson, but denounced America's first democrat because " the theories of the French Revolutionists at times over-excited his practical judgment." Here we have a President who a few weeks ago criticised the Daughters of the American Revolution for forgetting that their ancestors were revolutionists, and to-day regretting there is a leftist Jefferson in the democratic hagiology, and perhaps hoping that the American Revolution was not at all inspired by revolutionary ideas.

On the other hand, the President has won new friends, to be sure: the chambers of commerce ; the national associations of manufacturers ; the members of the newspaper publishers' association who in 1932 were 75 per cent. against him and in 1936 85 per cent. against him ; the applause of all enemies of labour, including William Green, President of the American Federation of Labour ; and finally a kiss of Caiaphas from our leading journalist, Miss Dorothy Thompson, whose columnar philosophy in the Tory New York *Herald Tribune* is syndicated to more than a hundred leading newspapers and supposedly read by 6,000,000 people.

> The President's annual message on the state of the Union, she wrote the other day, was, for him, singularly colourless. He trod cautiously, he awakened no sleeping dogs, he made no challenges, he attacked nobody, he held out no incandescent promises, he painted no bogies, he flattered no classes.

Very true. It was a declaration of shameful surrender and therefore Miss Thompson, newest knight at arms defending property rights against human rights, is very happy.

Among the liberals and intellectuals who are now so angry at themselves for having been deceived by their fellow liberal, there is a great effort to find an explanation of the President's betrayal, and Freud, the Bible and Marx are being called on to give the answer. Very few persons outside the Communists and a few of the most reactionary Republicans, who hate Roosevelt and will hate him no matter what he does, have pointed to the most obvious fact that the President is

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leading the nation into war, and that this fact explains every one of his actions since September 1, 1939.

It is most interesting to recall to-day the interview which H. G. Wells had with Stalin in 1934, shortly after the President had announced the New Deal, the Magna Carta of labour, and in fact a Utopian programme which was to equalise not only wealth but the possibility of happiness being more than a constitutional pursuit. Mr. Wells said that Roosevelt was making a colossal socialistic effort. Stalin replied:

> I do not belittle the personal qualities of President Roosevelt, his initiative, courage and decisiveness. Undoubtedly, of all the leaders of the present capitalist world, he is the most powerful figure. But as soon as he proceeds to undertake anything seriously threatening the foundations of capitalism he will suffer utter defeat. . . . .

Early in American history, when Washington was faced with defeat, Thomas Paine wrote the propaganda pamphlets which, more than cannon, helped to establish this republic. Paine bitterly attacked the cowards of his time, the " summer soldiers," the " sunshine patriots." There are no better phrases to describe our President. And the nation is becoming aware of the great betrayal.

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The Finnish Revolution—2

BY O. W. KUUSINEN

[*Last month* THE LABOUR MONTHLY *printed the first instalment of Otto Kuusinen's famous pamphlet of* 1918 *analysing the causes of the defeat of the Finnish Revolution in that year and exposing the character of Finnish Social-Democracy. That instalment, entitled "Fears and Hesitations in Face of the Revolution," formed Section I. of the original pamphlet, of which an English translation was published in London in* 1919.

The present reprint is taken, slightly abridged, from that translation, and is concluded below.

Comrade Kuusinen, now Premier of the Provisional Government of the Finnish Democratic Republic, is well-known as the most respected of Finland's revolutionary working-class Old Guard. He was Minister of Education in the Socialist Government of 1918 *which was brutally crushed by Mannerheim's White Guard, with the help of Imperial German troops.*]

II. FOR DEMOCRACY

DURING THE REVOLUTION which swept over Finland last winter, the Finnish Social-Democracy did not follow its tendency beyond the régime of general popular representation. On the contrary it sought as much as possible to create a régime which should be democratic in the highest degree. In the same order of ideas was the plan for setting up a "people's commissariat," a plan which seemed from time to time on the point of being adopted by referendum during the spring. By this project, the Diet elected on a democratic basis was to exercise the supreme power; the Government was only to be its executive committee; the president was not to have the right of independent action, and was to be subject to regular and direct control from the Diet; the people's power of initiative was to be very wide; officials were to be nominated for a certain length of time, and high officials were to be nominated by the Diet.

Of course this form of Government was not the final aim of the people's commissariat, but simply an instrument whose object was to realise social and economic aspirations. By this means it was hoped to create conditions favourable to evolution in the direction of Socialism, and to institute reforms from which the Socialist society should finally emerge.

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This idea appeared perfectly natural in the conditions then existing in Finland. A democratic régime in Finland would apparently have guaranteed a majority to the popular representation, a great part of which would openly have put forward claims to a Socialist régime, and probably the remainder would not have displayed much opposition to reforms going cautiously and step by step in this direction. The adversaries of Socialism would certainly have formed a minority in the Diet, and would have been powerless in such a situation. Such at least was our opinion.

Taking into consideration the economic life of Finland, an idea of this kind did not seem impossible of realisation. Apart from the fact that capitalist evolution was not in an advanced stage in Finland, it ought to have been easy, by reason of the simple nature of the conditions of production, to allow the State to take over most establishments—easier at any rate than in many countries having a more complex economic life. The timber and paper industries are those which are of the greatest importance in Finland, as regards the value of what is produced. Already two-thirds of the forests belong to the State. The paper industry is relatively centralised, and the taking over of about ten of the chief firms would evidently be tantamount to administering the whole industry. The same thing applies to the wood-sawing industry. Production is practically controlled by a very small number of big companies, who, by the way, are not looked upon favourably by the peasant proprietors. It was rightly maintained that the sequestration of a couple of hundred firms would have placed entire control in the hands of the State, and consequently would have given a decisive influence on the other branches of capitalism. In this way the State would have become the preponderating capitalist, not as a State ruled by the bourgeoisie and private capital to serve as an instrument of class, but as a "Popular State," in which the bourgeoisie, being in the minority, would no longer have held supreme power. Power would have fallen completely into the hands of the working-class majority, who would have used it to their own advantage so as to change the economic activity of the State in such wise as to make it watch ever more and more over the interests of the workers, and so to transform the State into a Socialist Society.

A social policy on these lines was in the minds of the Finnish People's Commissariat. At any rate a certain number of its members expected that the majority of the democratic Diet would adopt the measure of taking over the big timber and paper factories on the scale mentioned above, and of putting foreign trade under State control, which would, of course, have resulted in a change in the situation of the State Bank. It is difficult and useless now to speculate as to what would have happened if German Imperialism had not come to the rescue of the capitalists of Finland, if the workers had obtained the victory. But without yielding to such vague speculations, it can now be seen that

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the idea of the Democratic State, with which the People's Commissariat deluded itself, was *historically false.*

It wished to build a bridge, to construct a passage from Capitalism to Socialism. But democracy is unable to bear the burden of such a mission. Its historic character has made itself felt in the course of the Revolution. It satisfied neither the bourgeois nor the workers, although no one openly declared against it. The bourgeoisie did not think it prudent to declare against democracy, and the workers, these same workers who in 1904-5 had fought with such glowing enthusiasm for democracy, remained indifferent enough. For one party as for the other, the dictatorship was now alone to be desired—for the bourgeoisie the White Dictatorship, for the workers the Red Dictatorship. Both felt in their secret hearts that the democratic plan was neither a compromise nor a reconciliation. . . . To go further along the democratic road, in other words to make use of the class struggle without having recourse to violent methods, was an historical impossibility.

It is easy enough at this distance to discover this important truth, but it was more difficult to do so in Finland last year. The relative feebleness of the Finnish bourgeoisie, its inability to carry on a Parliamentary struggle, and the fact that it had no armed forces, were so many factors through which we Social-Democrats were predestined to suffer from the democratic illusion, inasmuch as we wished to reach Socialism by means of a struggle in the Diet and by democratic representation of the people. This was equivalent to entering on a course which could not agree with the true postulates of history—to seek to avoid a Socialist Revolution, to shun the real bridge between Capitalism and Socialism, *i.e.*, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is an historical necessity.

III. A First Communist Programme in the Revolutionary Struggle

When at the end of January, 1918, the Finnish bourgeoisie gave the word of command to its butchers to begin the attack, Social Democracy was indignant *because of* democracy. "The bourgeoisie is violating and destroying democracy"—so ran the cry from the Social-Democratic side—"To arms! Democracy is in danger." And so indeed it was. The bourgeois wished once and for all to emerge from their torpor, to throw off their democratic chains, which were for them an obstacle if not a danger. They desired to set up a naked class tyranny, an unchecked pillaging authority, a "strong police," a butchers' republic, or, as we shall see, a butchers' monarchy.

That is what the bourgeoisie wanted. Social-Democracy replied by revolution. But what was its watchword? The power of the workers? No, it was democracy, a democracy which should not be violated. Our position from a Socialist standpoint was not clear, and viewed historically was Utopian. Such a democracy could at best be created only on

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paper. Such a thing has never existed in a society formed of classes, and can never develop there. In democracy a robber class has always stolen power from the people. . . .

When the Finnish bourgeoisie provoked the workers to an open struggle for class supremacy, the workers' party ought to have chosen some clear and definite position. One of these two: either to take up the challenge and engage in a revolutionary struggle for *working-class power*, or to submit without a struggle to the bourgeoisie, recognising its own weakness and betraying the cause of its class. The Finnish working-class party did not decide for one or for the other course. It did its duty by going into battle, it drew up its forces for the struggle, but it was for a *defensive* struggle, not for a definite revolutionary fight. It is true that we talked much of revolution, and we actually took part in a struggle which was by nature revolutionary, but it was with closed eyes that we did so, without being conscious of the meaning of this social revolution. We talked at the same time of democracy and a democratic State, which meant, if anything, that revolution was perforce the very thing to be avoided. *Thus the standard of revolution was in reality raised—so that revolution might be avoided.*

In our situation that was an enormous mistake. Now that we have understood this, we ought also to recognise it openly, even if we did not do so at the opportune moment. We did not grasp the fact that when the revolution broke out, the workers threw democracy violently aside, blotted it out as a hindrance and a point of no value in their programme. If the workers of Finland had not accepted the challenge thrown down by the bourgeoisie, but had meekly allowed themselves to be beaten, imprisoned and slaughtered, certainly a protecting democratic programme would have been in its place. But on that day in January when the worker raised his hand against his mortal enemy, that hand tore away the democratic rags and tatters which separated them. After that day, to keep up the pretence of a democratic programme was equivalent to a retreat; as was also the case with a democracy " favourable to the workers," like that included in the plan for a constitution drawn up by the People's Commissariat.

The fact that the representatives of a class in revolution, or engaged in any other phase of the class struggle, are not conscious of the struggle's true aim and import does not necessarily mean that one must give up the struggle or that all is bound to end in shipwreck. It ought not to be interpreted as a struggle against one's own class, or as conscious or unconscious deception. The struggle in itself is a historic fact, it is the principal fact which decided and conduces to a true result, and each man who, according to the measure of his strength and ability takes part in the revolutionary struggle of the aroused class, upholds that class in so doing, even if on his lips and his thoughts he nourishes the most unhistoric, unscientific facts one could wish for. The Finnish Social Democracy, by carrying out its duty of putting up a fight, did not betray

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its class, and by its struggle upheld the programme of the revolution, even though inscribed on its banners were the watchwords of the old democracy.

It was not the first time in the history of the world that such a thing had taken place as the foremost champions of a struggling class adopting a watchword which was not consonant with the historical idea of their struggle. Revolutionary watchwords have generally arisen fortuitously, and have been made up of high-sounding, superficial and not very farseeing political phrases, to which are joined as by chance the strange expressions of an inverted symbolism. For example, the Hussite movement in Bohemia was at bottom a struggle for the most real class advantages, although in the first place the point at issue was a theological dispute concerning the Host, communion, and the drinking of wine. During the Finnish revolution the democratic programme was for the Social-Democrats of Finland their communion wine. It did not hinder Social-Democracy from taking part in the revolutionary struggle, but as a programme it was no longer of service in the struggle itself. . . .

The modern Socialist Party, whose activity should be based on a Marxist and consequently scientific policy, has less than any other, any reason or point of honour for carrying this symbolism to the barricade. For, worst of all, it was for us a weakness and a hindrance in the struggle. The knowledge that the fight is for a definite object is sufficient in itself to raise the morale and endurance of the fighters, but the lack of a clear aim induces uncertainty, hesitation and weakness. Such was the case with the February revolution in Finland. We did not keep order with enough energy. For example, at Helsingfors we gave too free a rein to the bourgeoisie, which allowed them to carry on a campaign of plotting against us. Domiciliary visits and imprisonment of offenders were not carried out with sufficient energy. Counter-revolutionaries, who had been proved guilty, were punished with too much leniency. We did not put these gentlemen of leisure early enough under the obligation of working, and we should certainly have acted with more insight if we had put forward the dictatorship of the proletariat as the evident aim of the revolution. From the very moment that this was not done, our action held to a middle, dangerous way, which fact was in itself sufficient to make the bourgeoisie bolder in their plots, and at the same time to encourage certain anarchic elements which had found their way into the Red Guards to commit, for their own ends, murders, robberies, and other misdeeds—a lack of discipline which tended to produce disorder in the ranks even of the revolutionaries.

The result of the Finnish revolution did not, however, depend upon these circumstances. It was impossible to avoid defeat when the German Government had joined the other hangmen. But suppose the German Government had not interfered, what would have happened? We cannot say with certainty, but it is possible that the result of the struggle might have depended on whether revolutionary order was to be severely

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maintained for a considerable time as an intentional dictatorship, or whether it was to be merely a humanitarian stage on the road leading to the haven of peaceful democracy. . . .

One thing, which in some measure contributed to giving a certain character to the programme of the People's Commissariat and the Finnish Social Democracy, was the line of action we felt bound to pursue with respect to the petty bourgeois and peasant, endeavouring not to repel or frighten them with the terms Socialism and Dictatorship of the Proletariat, but striving to quieten them by talking democracy and otherwise treating them gently. This was well enough as an election dodge, but it was not revolutionary tactics. During the revolution this prudence on our part was seen to be a mistake. The tranquillity of the petty bourgeoisie, and their vague sympathies, did not and could not have any noteworthy influence on the development of the struggle. The fighting spirit depended entirely upon the workers, upon their enthusiasm, boldness and confidence in the revolutionary leaders. Democratic formulæ were calculated rather to depress than to stimulate the workers' enthusiasm, for without any doubt they looked upon them as something out of place rather than as the final aim for which the worker was, if need arose, joyfully to sacrifice his life. The clear signals of class Socialism would have aroused their ardour in an altogether different way. They would then have felt that the struggle was indeed carrying them onward straight to the realisation of the greatest historical ideal. And if they had seen that the leaders of the revolution treated the bourgeoisie with the severity which must be used in a bloody class war towards the enemies and oppressors who but deserved to be oppressed in their turn, then the workers would have felt in their hearts a boundless confidence in their comrades at the head of things.

For every working-class party leading a revolution, the most precious thing to possess is the enthusiastic confidence of the workers. No mite of this should be lost, if we want to see the revolution triumphant.

IV. The Logic of the Storm

The proletarian revolution is above all else a great work of organisation. The power of the Government should be organised as the mechanism of the power of the working class; the proletarian army should be organised as a sure support of this power, and the class struggle should be organised on a Socialist basis. . . .

In the practical work of Government organisation we were at the outset led into the right path through a general strike of officials. In spite of all our wanderings in the paths of Liberalism, the entire management of State and municipal affairs fell into the hands of the organised workers from the moment the officials had decided unanimously to strike. In places a certain number kept at work, but generally speaking their aim was either sabotage or to help the butchers to make war. This happened on the railways and in the post and telegraph offices.

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As far as the latter are concerned, we should perhaps have played our game better by dismissing all employees known for their bourgeois opinions, even if this had dislocated and diminished, or for that matter almost entirely suspended, the telegraphic service for a time: for as long as the civil war was in progress, it was dangerous to permit adversaries and deserters to continue at their work in the railway and telegraph services. A free telephone service could be used for the purposes of military espionage by members of the bourgeois class remaining on our side of the front. Moreover, its use during the time of open struggle ought to have been reduced to a minimum, since a really effective control cannot be exercised in any case.

As a result of the general strike of managers and technical experts, the organisation of production went partly in the direction desired by the workers, *i.e.*, that of socialisation, much more rapidly and completely than our Social-Democracy had wished it to go. First of all came, naturally, the state and municipal commercial establishments, which fell into the hands of the organised workers, but they were soon followed by several big capitalist concerns, notably by the biggest enterprise of its kind in the country—the paper factories. Generally speaking the re-opening of the factories stopped by the capitalists did not present any insurmountable difficulties to the workers. Doubtless the want of technical experts would later on have made itself felt more strongly than at first, but however imperfect the resources at the workers' command, experience proved in most cheering fashion that the workers of Finland were capable of organising production. In the majority of industries much greater success was obtained than had ever been counted on.

On the other hand in the civil war itself, and in the organisation of the Red Army, mistakes, irregularities and omissions were made, due largely, it is true, to lack of experience and technical knowledge, but also to the fact that sufficient attention was not paid to organising for the combat itself. Preparations for taking up the struggle were not sufficiently detailed or methodical and lacked energy. Not even the arrest of the bourgeois agitators had been prepared for beforehand. The Red Army was at first formed solely of volunteers from the ranks of the organised workers; later unorganised workers were admitted; in some places they were forced to join the army; in others universal compulsory military service was set up, and even the bourgeoisie were sent to the front armed with rifles. Evidently the most practical measure would have been to adopt general compulsory service in the working class by calling up all men able to bear arms, or those of certain classes. Army pay, which was about the same as that received by a well-paid worker, need not have been so high. The provisioning of the army was organised in a satisfactory manner, but the need of footwear and clothing was great, especially the former. The transport and storage of munitions, so that they could be at hand when wanted, was at first

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badly organised, and never was really satisfactory. Worst of all was the organisation of the intelligence system. . . . And the Red Army also suffered from the lack of trained, capable and punctual officers who could inspire confidence. We had previously had no trained forces, since the country had been without an army for a sufficiently long period; only a few old non-commissioned officers were requisitioned by the workers. The most elementary military instruction for officers would certainly have been extremely useful, but it was not to be had, and we were without it throughout the whole course of the revolution.

To a most alarming extent it was sheer hazard which decided to whom such or such a post of command should be given. Sometimes these men were equal to the task before them, and made model troops of their men. But there were also in the officers' corps and in the staffs a great number of unskilful, incompetent men, who, while not ne'er-do-wells, were nevertheless mere talkers who had never yet succeeded in any organising work or post of command, and who did not know how to set about things, although they had risen in the general confusion. If the well-tried organisers of the working-class movement had volunteered in greater numbers to lead the operations (as often was the case), the leadership of the civil war would certainly have improved on our side. The agitation undertaken in our ranks by the paid agents of the bourgeoisie against our military command would then have borne less fruit. An underground agitation of this kind is in a civil war the most dangerous and insidious weapon of the bourgeoisie, and the greater the number of elements with obscure antecedents who rise to the surface during a revolution, the more easily when reverses come do doubts arise about the honesty and incorruptibility of leaders.

The general leadership on our side also leaves much room for criticism. Lack of arms was the chief reason why a more energetic and continuous offensive was not undertaken at the outset. However, even when we had obtained arms, there was still the lack of drilled men. The weeks which had gone by had not been employed in energetically forming and drilling new troops, for no one had then expected a long civil war extending over several months. There was no regular specialist organisation. Our troops fought practically the whole time without reserves, a most fatiguing and dangerous thing.

True, our front resisted the enemy's attacks, but, wanting as we were in reserves and in special shock battalions, we were not in a position to make any really serious attacks. As our advance on the northern front continued for some time, there resulted from it to the north of Tammerfors a dangerous bulge, the flanks of which were almost entirely uncovered. This bulge required five or six times more men to hold it than a straight front immediately to the north of Tammerfors would have needed. We were soon to pay for this tactical error. The Whites' flank attack produced such unsteadiness amongst the tired troops holding the inside of the arc, and forced them to retreat in such dis-

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order, that the enemy had every opportunity for surrounding Tammerfors and pushing his front to the south of the town.

Without doubt our troops were already depressed by the announcement that the German Government had promised to come to the aid of the bourgeoisie, by sending first of all an expedition to the Aaland Islands to facilitate the transport of arms and troops in Finland. It was in Aaland, too, that the descent on our rear of the Germans and of the butchers' troops was prepared. The Tsarist officers had taken good care that the enemy should encounter no more resistance from the fortifications outside Hangö than they did at Aaland. The Russian defenders had been withdrawn, but the forts had not been handed over to the Finns. The landing at Hangö, which we could not prevent for want of troops, directly threatened the capital, and made the defence of the whole of south-west Finland a forlorn hope. The evacuation of the whole of this territory began at once with the object of retiring into eastern Finland, up to the line of the river Kymene, for example. But it then appeared that it was difficult to withdraw troops from localities which had not been attacked by the enemy. Whilst our evacuation and retreat were being delayed, the enemy got imposing forces together in eastern Finland to prevent our retreating into Russia. Towards the end of April it became impossible for us to resist these attacks made by the troops of the international butchers. And when our Karelian front was broken the greatest part of our army was surrounded. Probably only four or five thousand of our revolutionary forces managed to pass into Russia.

The Government of Finland had at first asked for help from the Swedish Government. Arms and munitions were constantly coming in from Sweden, but the negotiations came to nothing as far as direct military intervention was concerned. On their side the Swedes tried during the revolution to put an embargo on Aaland, which belonged to Finland. When the defeat of the revolutionary army was certain, and there was left only the hangman's work to do, Sweden sent her " black brigade " to Tammerfors to drink the blood of the revolutionary workers, a thing which the faithful Socialist lackeys of the Swedish Government and bourgeoisie made no attempt to prevent. Before the arrival of the black brigade a semi-official delegation of Right Swedish Socialists came to Helsingfors, and Möller, the secretary of the party, declared in their name that the victory of the Finnish Revolution would be a disaster for international democracy. The international Socialist swindlers were thus already afraid of our revolution. They feared lest it should spread the flames which threatened to set fire to the feathers of the couch which the bourgeoisie had prepared for them. For us, on the other hand, it seems terrible that our revolution with its democratic programme might have been triumphant. It would have troubled the understanding of the workers of neighbouring countries in relation to the great task of the proletarian revolution.

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Once more did victory rest with capitalist violence. German imperialism gave ear to the lamentations of our bourgeois, and gave itself out as ready to swallow up the newly-acquired independence, which, at the request of the Finnish Social Democrats, had been granted to Finland by the Soviet Republic of Russia. The national sentiment of the bourgeoisie did not suffer in the least on this account, and the yoke of a foreign imperialism had no terrors for them when it seemed that their "fatherland" was on the point of becoming the fatherland of the workers. They were willing to sacrifice the entire people to the mighty German bandit provided that they could keep for themselves the dishonourable position of slave drivers.

They were now indeed in this position, and they took the whip in hand. And never had the whip been wielded in more bestial, brutal fashion than it was under Svinhufvud's rule in Finland every day uninterruptedly for seven months. The savage lust for revenge on the part of the Finnish bourgeoisie was responsible for more victims amongst defenceless prisoners than the war of the classes had cost the workers during three months. By a systematic mass massacre of our comrades, the butchers' Government seemed as if it were desirous of proving to the workers of all lands what relentless vengeance they, the workers, bring upon themsleves if they do not from the moment they arrive in power subject the bourgeoisie of their country to an iron dictatorship, instead of remaining animated, as was the revolutionary Government in Finland, by such delicate feelings of humanity towards their class enemies. Not content with mass shootings, the bourgeoisie immediately set about starving their prisoners to death. Evidently this is the favourite form of vengeance for the clerical-monarchic-capitalist joint stock company! When the workers, feeling themselves proudly to be the true proprietors and creators of all wealth, are writhing in the pangs of hunger and dying one after the other, then it is that the fine shareholder enjoys such a sight all the more, whets his appetite with it, and feels what superhuman power is his! Like all scoundrels he relishes it so much as to forget that the labour-power of the worker is necessary to him, until some private capitalist, like Baron Linder in this case, aroused from his intoxicating joy by the view of depopulated fields and factories, gives utterance to the truth that "this is shameful," and exhorts his boon companions in Svinhufvud's camp to exercise more moderation in their revenge.

The capitalists' paradise was now well nigh complete. The golden crown alone was lacking. But it was soon ordered—vulgar work from the Hohenzollern branch in Hesse, and modelled on Master William's designs. On the eve of the day when the bourgeois Diet was to elect its king, the Nemesis of History raised a warning finger, and in Bulgaria and on the French front there sounded the fateful funeral knell of German imperialism. The mad masters of Finland did not yet understand the importance of retreating. They wished to run full tilt with

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their horns against the wall. Soon we shall see them cringing and fawning before British imperialism—until such time as the workers shall make short shrift of the British brigand too.

The workers' movement in Finland was broken last spring, and will not be reborn in its primitive form. The axe without an edge was cast into the furnace of history—to be re-smelted, and soon we shall see it emerge pure Communist steel! The rust and scum float on the surface in Finland. The Socialist renegades under the leadership of Tanner, a former senator, came upon the scene to barter openly their worn-out ideals for the greater joy of the bourgeois " Progressives." " Comrade " Tokoi, accompanied by the comedian Orjatsalo and others, shifted their stall to the Archangel market, there to play a tragi-comic farce to keep up the Finnish Legion, lured into the ranks of British imperialism. At the end of August, 1918, we finally settled our accounts with the officials of the old organisation at the Moscow Congress, when the Communist Party of Finland was founded on the following fundamental principles :

(1) The working class must energetically prepare for an armed revolution, and not hang back with the old system with its Parliaments, its trade unions and co-operative societies.

(2) Only a working-class party working for the propagation of Communism and for the success of the future social revolution can be recognised or supported. All other action must be resolutely condemned, unmasked and combatted.

(3) By the revolution the working class must take all power into its hands, and set up an iron dictatorship. Therefore our efforts must lead to the suppression of the bourgeois state and not to the setting up of a democracy, neither before nor after the revolution.

(4) Through the dictatorship of the workers must be created a Communist society, by means of the expropriation of all land and capitalist property, and by the workers taking production and distribution into their own hands.

(5) The proletarian revolution must be propagated as energetically as possible, and the Russian People's Soviet Socialist Republic supported by every means in our power.

When the historical conditions are absent, to make a revolution is contrary to the Marxist idea. After a revolution has failed, fugitives have often succumbed to the temptation of arranging for revolutionary plots with their eyes closed, and at moments when the course of events has brought about the disappearance of favourable conditions. These improvisers of revolution and this revolutionary stupidity have been censured in the severest way by Marx. On the other hand, when history has entered upon a revolutionary period, when conditions favourable to revolution seem to exist, when it appears to be " coming," as is the case in Europe to-day, then inactivity or the curbing of the march of revolution must be strongly condemned from a Marxist point of view.

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The working-class movement should take the direction of revolution, should prepare itself seriously for the event, and not seek to avoid it by other action.

It is in this spirit that we now want to take action in Finland, as in Russia, and everywhere where our young forces may be necessary to the success of the international proletarian revolution. . . . In an open letter addressed to Comrade Lenin our party congress asked him to give the following message to the Russian friends of our Party: "The Finnish Communists go with joy into the battle. We would fain be there when the final assault is given to the fortresses of capitalism, and raze them level with the ground. The Finnish Communists will not lag behind when the Proletarians of all lands are conquering the world."

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Czech Freedom—How ?

Munich : Before and After by Dr. Hubert Ripka. (Gollancz. 15s.)

A NUMBER OF books have already been published on the Munich betrayal. Some English and French authors have described the sequence of events and discussed the causes and effects of the tragic fate of the Czechoslovak Republic. Now we have got for the first time a comprehensive survey written by a prominent Czech politician. Dr. Ripka's study contains some very interesting documents, partly published here for the first time, and describes the course of events from Chamberlain's fateful flight to Berchtesgaden up to the march of the German troops into Prague.

Ripka is one of the representatives of Czech bourgeois democracy, a follower of Masaryk and Benes. In the critical weeks of 1938 he stood for the defence of the country against Nazi attack, he was a resolute adherent of the treaty with the Soviet Union, and he was one of the few bourgeois politicians who fought against surrender and who recommended at that time the refusal of the British-French ultimatum and the risk of a life and death struggle against German Fascism relying on the assistance of the Soviet Union.

What has such a man learnt from the tragic events of 1938 and afterwards ? How does he explain the collapse of his country, which was at the same time a collapse of the whole political concept of his leaders, Masaryk and Benes ? What are the conclusions to be drawn from this collapse ?

Ripka describes the terrible shock that the leading Czech politicians experienced when they learned about the betrayal of their French and English allies. But this shock was evidently not strong enough to move these men to revise the fundamentals of their policy. A thorough political analysis of the Munich catastrophe should answer the following questions : Why did the English and French Governments desert their ally ? Why did they help German Imperialism, their dangerous enemy, so much that Germany could risk afterwards just that war that we are living through now ? Ripka does not answer these questions ; he does not even ask them properly. Through more than 500 pages one looks in vain for any real analysis of the causes of the policy of the Great Powers, or for a critical survey of the policy of the Czech ruling class and of the different political parties in Czechoslovakia.

How is one to explain the policy of England and France, so fateful to peace and freedom for the nations of Europe ? Ripka's explanation is very simple. The leading statesmen of England and France did not understand Nazism and did not know what was at stake. But to explain the policy of the ruling classes just by their stupidity means to fool oneself. The British and French Governments did nothing to stop Nazi aggression at that time ; they even encouraged it. So it is clear that they were not interested in stopping the Nazi advance. Their aim evidently was to deflect German aggression from the capitalist West to the socialist East. This is the only way to explain British and French policy from the imperialist and class interests of the ruling classes of these countries.

Ripka says, " The insufficient understanding in London and in Paris of the real significance of the Sudeten-German question proved fatal to us." (p. 22.) If Chamberlain and Daladier were really not clever enough to understand that the aim of the Nazis was not the " liberation " of the Sudeten-Germans but the occupation of Czechoslovakia, they must have learnt it

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when Hitler came out with his demands at Godesberg and Munich. For these demands were clearly not concerned with the Sudeten-Germans but with the destruction of every possible defence of Czechoslovak independence. Ripka declares it to be " unbelievable and incomprehensible " that France not only broke her oath of alliance but even actively forced the Czechoslovak Government to accept the cession of vast territories. (p. 82.)

But when England and France betrayed Czechoslovakia, why was it that the Czechoslovak Government did not apply for help to her Soviet ally ? Ripka explains that England and France did not want such a Soviet intervention in support of Czechoslovakia because they were afraid of the spreading of Bolshevism in this way. With Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union fighting together against German aggression it would have been an " ideological war " and English and French sympathies would have been on the side of the Berlin-Rome Axis. The Czech right-wing parties, moreover, would certainly have protested against accepting help from Russia alone. (p. 83.)

These facts amply explain what Ripka calls " unbelievable and incomprehensible." What Chamberlain, Daladier and Bonnet did in September, 1938, was not caused by stupidity nor by fear of war, nor on account of not being prepared for war, but only because they did not want a common stand with the Soviet Union against fascist aggression. They knew that the victory of such a peace front, a victory possible at that time without a war, would have meant a victory of all anti-fascist and progressive forces in Europe and therefore also a victory for Socialism. The British and French bourgeoisie preferred a war to that alternative. Therefore we have got a war. The Czech reactionary bourgeoisie preferred surrender to that alternative. Therefore Czechoslovakia was destroyed.

The Czech bourgeois democrats like Benes and Ripka do not want to see these facts. They were led by their " allies " to surrender, to the loss of national independence because they shrank from open fight against Czech reaction and from open alliance with the revolutionary forces. The great majority of the nation desired to defend national independence, relying on the help of the U.S.S.R. This was proved in the clearest way on September 22 when the Hodza government had surrendered to the British-French ultimatum. On an appeal of the Communist Party and led by the workers of the Prague factories a quarter of a million men demonstrated against betrayal and surrender and demanded that the frontiers be defended. The Ministers and M.P.s understood very well what the nation really wanted, and therefore the Hodza government resigned and a new government led by General Syrovy was formed. This government promised to be firm in defending the country's independence, but Syrovy behaved like a traitor afterwards. Indeed as Ripka, the close friend of President Benes who was Czechoslovakia's most influential man at that time, confesses, this change of government was not far from a direct deception of the people.

> Actually the members of Dr. Hodza's political cabinet continued to function in the rôle of " Advisory Council " for the new government and important political decisions were arrived at only after consultation with this body, the President of the Republic and the leaders of the Governmental parties. Thus the political leadership of the State remained in fact in the same hands as before. . . . (p. 110).

So the old wavering reactionary and treacherous politicians practically remained at the top. Nevertheless the great mass demonstration checked the betrayal that was already prepared for that day and so forced the " appeasers " to go on with their intervention on behalf of fascist aggression.

Even if Ripka tries and excuses the policy of British and French reaction by lack of understanding, he alleges sufficient facts to show how deliberately

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the betrayal was performed. Especially is the guilt of Daladier and Bonnet clearly exposed. Chamberlain had no trouble in persuading the French Government to let down their ally. When after the Godesberg interview Bonnet felt that there was a possibility of a firmer attitude on the part of the British Government, he even ordered his envoy in London to present certain conditions for a common effort to help Czechoslovakia, conditions which he knew to be unacceptable to the British Government. (p. 66.)

After all Chamberlain himself has stated clearly enough why he did not want to assist Czechoslovakia, while he is now so enthusiastic about defending the freedom of small nations like the Poles and the Finns. He said in his wireless speech on September 27:

> However much we may sympathise with a small nation confronted by a big powerful neighbour, we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire simply on her account. If we have to fight, it must be on larger issues than that. . . . But if I were convinced that any nation had made up its mind to dominate the world by fear of its force, I should feel that it must be resisted. (pp. 202-3.)

Could it be said more clearly that the British Government is not prepared to fight for the independence of any nation, but determined to defend the world power of the British Empire?

In March, 1939, Czech reaction dealt the last blow to Czech independence. Ripka is absolutely silent about this side of the Czechoslovak tragedy. One would not learn from him that there was a strong party in Czechoslovakia, even the strongest party in number of votes, the Agrarians, representing big landowners and industrialists, who from the very first conspired with the Nazis, advocated concessions to them and became the gravediggers of the independence of their nation.

Ripka polemises against those who advised the Czechs to reconcile Nazism by concessions to the Henlein party. But he does not mention that this policy was advocated by the Agrarian reactionaries from the outset, that they directly helped the Henlein fascists against Sudeten Socialists, Communists and Democrats, because they saw in German Fascism an ally against the working class and against democracy.

The existence of such a party as the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia uniting workers and peasants of all nations of the country in one brotherly union proves that a thorough solidarity of all nations of Czechoslovakia in defence against foreign aggression was possible if imperialist and reactionary influences were removed. A government relying firmly on the toiling masses and breaking the influence of reactionary traitors would have been able to solve the so-called national question and to organise a united front of defence of all nations.

Ripka sees only one alternative.

> Either Europe surrenders to the hegemony of the Third Reich or Germany must submit to Europe and become culturally and socially a member of the European community. (p. 467.)

But what Munich has proved is that there is no such fundamental contradiction between Europe and Nazi Germany. There and then Chamberlain and Daladier, who are at war with Germany now, openly professed that they would kindly accept Nazi Germany into the "European community" provided that this helped to exclude the Socialist Soviet Union from this community. The same was proved by the negotiations about the peace front in the spring of 1939. British and Franch Imperialism prefer a great war to a European community embracing the Socialist power.

So the real alternative for the small nations of Central Europe is not to submit either to Nazi domination or to British-French domination and to get a very problematic independence in that way, an independence totally dependent on imperialist interests and ruthlessly destroyed when it does

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not harmonise with those interests. The real alternative—not only for the Czech nation, but for all small nations—is either to be tools and victims of imperialism or to be allies of social revolution.

> Ripka speaks about a future European federation founded on social democracy, which unites the principles of freedom and of the inalienable rights of the individual with those of economic and social justice, and guarantees real equality for the " fourth estate." (p. 480.)

This phrase about equality of estates instead of the abolition of classes is a typical expression of petty bourgeois inability to face facts and to make a choice between Socialism and Capitalism. Quoting the international policy of the Soviet Union as a model of a policy respecting the independence of all nations and of the rejection of all imperialist ambitions, Ripka expresses the hope that the Germany of the future will develop its international relations along similar lines. (p. 481.) The same causes have the same effects. The victory of socialist revolution in Germany will have exactly the same results in international policy as the victory of the Bolshevik revolution had in Russia.

The right of self-determination of all nations, big and small, will be respected only when Imperialism has been defeated by socialist revolution. A free federation of independent nations which help and protect each other will be brought about between nations liberated from capitalists, as the example of the Soviet Union shows. Without the victory of socialist revolution all those nice phrases about federation are idle illusions or camouflage for imperialist domination.

War has sharpened all issues. Ripka, who speaks about the rights of the fourth estate, who writes eulogies on the international policy of the Soviet Union, who stigmatises the Munich policy of the British and French Governments, who hopes for a revolution in Germany, has meanwhile become a member of the so-called Czechoslovak National Committee which is utterly dependent on those reactionary governments which let Czechoslovakia down in 1938, a committee which is in no way connected with the working masses of the Czechoslovak nation and which is dominated by those Czech reactionaries who helped to destroy her independence.

Hard experience has taught the working class and will teach the masses that they have to judge by deeds and not by words. We are sure that the masses of Czechoslovakia have learned the bitter lesson of 1938-39 better than such leaders as Benes and Ripka. If in 1918-19 the Czech working class had assumed leadership, if they had not trusted their bourgeoisie to form their republic, then Czechoslovakia would not have been the tool of Western Imperialism, but a free alliance of free nations and their freedom would have been as safe as is now the freedom of the peoples of the Soviet Union. Therefore the fighters for national freedom in Czechoslovakia will not trust the promises of those imperialists who betrayed her in 1938, but they will trust the revolutionary forces of their own nation, of the peoples of Germany and Austria and the support of the great socialist power in the east.

The nations of Central Europe will be free again—not by a new Versailles, but by a new October. J.L.

More War Aims

Our War Aims by Wickham Steed. (Secker & Warburg. 3s. 6d.)

THIS IS ONE of the series of books justifying, or rather endeavouring to justify, the war on the basis of aims that have not the slightest chance of being put into effect in the event of an Allied victory, as indeed the political

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maturity of their authors must enable them very well to be aware.

The characteristic of the author of the present example, Wickham Steed, is his knowledge of Germany and German history. In its light he emphasises that " Hitler is not an isolated phenomenon." Of course he is correct, in the sense that a state in the position of Germany has, in the past, as in the present, experienced the same conflict of interest with the same surrounding states, and that the same material needs and struggles have produced the same superstructure of ideological justification for them. The " new thing " here is simply the greater acceleration of the relations, the hypertrophied development of the representative to the point of ridiculous phantasy (Rosenberg's *Myth of the 20th Century*, *Mein Kampf*, etc.), deriving from the harder crystallisation of states characteristic of capitalism and especially of its imperialist stage.

But Steed's deduction is almost a " race-theory " on the Hitler model. If not that, at least a " culture-theory." The peculiarities of the German position have made the German people always believe in force and perfidy, etc., and the only way to cure them is by a resounding military victory which will prove that such goings-on do not pay, with preferably a splitting up into a " sub-confederation of German states " to follow.

The tragic ridiculousness and blind chauvinism of this attitude is illustrated by the catalogue of history cited by Mr. Steed to bolster up this generalisation. He appears to be perfectly unaware that an identical (or longer) catalogue of similarly convincing English deeds and words could be prepared, as doubtless could one for many other peoples.

That which Steed has in common with the authors of similar books is the hypocrisy of his solution. To put the points briefly :

1. Germany back to 1919 frontiers. " Independent decision " " without propaganda or pressure of any kind " for the parts incorporated since then.

Mr. Steed cannot seriously pretend to believe that a victorious British and French imperialism will be any more ready to cede the right of Austro-German union, if the Austrian people should so decide, than they were to allow the customs union in the last post-war period.

2. Hitler and the Nazis to go. A Government in Germany based on a representative democratic system.

Mr. Steed cannot seriously pretend to believe that the British and French governments, which destroyed democracy in Spain and Czecho-Slovakia, would, victorious, tolerate it in Germany if the people through their representative system, came to any decision they did not like.

3. Federal association, starting during the war if possible, of all the peoples linked with the present anti-Hitler combination.

Mr. Steed cannot seriously pretend to believe that this is anything but a system whereby British-French imperialism dominates their associates, by means of preponderating British-French arms, yet more completely than at present.

4. The German people, now democratically governed, either as a unit or split up, after disarming to the level " requisite to the maintenance of internal order," and setting up institutions guaranteeing personal freedom, etc., for all Germans without distinction of class, race, etc., to be admitted to the Federal association.

Mr. Steed cannot seriously pretend to believe that this is anything but a programme for the incorporation of German resources into the British-French dominated empire on the basis of institutions approved by its rulers (and guaranteeing, for example, that personal freedom that exists in France today ?).

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5. Neutral countries to be eligible to come into the federation if their institutions correspond to its principles and they agree to be neutral again.

" Eligible " is good. " Will you come into my parlour," said the Gamelin-Gort-City of London-200 families-international trust and cartel-Citrine-Jouhaux monster to the neutral fly. " You have only to make your institutions conform to my principles."

6. Colonies " eventually " to be under federal trusteeship for the welfare of the inhabitants, equality of access to their raw materials for all federation members, provision for present colonies one day to be nations " eligible " for federation membership.

This hardly needs comment. Without adding a syllable, this is a plain plan for endless robbery and exploitation with the whole Gamelin-Gort apparatus behind any international cartel that has to face a colony ungrateful enough one day not to want to take advantage of its eligibility.

7. Reorganisation of the league as an instrument for relations between federation members, but all league members to agree to automatic sanctions (at least all up to military ones) against any warring nations.

Mr. Steed cannot seriously pretend to believe that, if this league is to be any more than the rump of Anglo-French-influenced puppets that met recently at Geneva, the victorious Anglo-French imperialists would assent to the circumscription of their power implicit in automatic sanctions which they wrecked the league in 1938 rather than approve.

In fine and in large we perceive that, as with all other " war aims " trumpeters, Mr. Steed's plans envisage immeasurably enhanced world power for British and French imperialism, and that in so far as any constructive or progressive or generous proposal may be implied in the noble verbiage with which the above aim is unscrupulously veiled, it is realisable only by the *defeat* of British-French as well as German imperialism. Not all his gentle and " reasonable " erudition suffices to evade the issue: peace and war cannot be solved by reforms and rearrangements of the pattern of international relations, but only as part of *revolutionary* change and victory.

IVOR MONTAGU.

Introduction to Philosophy

A Text Book of Dialectical Materialism by David Guest. (Lawrence and Wishart. 2s.).

THIS LITTLE BOOK is the product of David Guest's teaching of dialectical materialism at Marx House. It attempts to outline in less than 100 short pages the guiding principles of Marxism, appealing especially to those people who believe that the labour movement has no need of a theory.

The story of Guest's own life was a clear example of a successful attempt to make a reality of the unity of theory and practice. As to so many intellectuals, theory came to him easily. But he fully understood what this theory implied and finally gave his life in its practice. His actual experiences find their expression in this work and add greatly to its value, for every aspect of theory is closely linked with present realities.

There is probably no more telling criterion of a person's understanding of a subject than his ability or inability to compress into a small space a

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popular introduction to this question. Two traps lie ahead, overcompression leading to incomprehensibility and oversimplification leading to misrepresentation. It is never easy, even for the most skilled to steer a clear course between these two difficulties.

These difficulties are very obvious in this little book. As is inevitable in many cases the bare bones of the ideas of Marxism alone can be presented and the richness of content of many aspects are lost in the enforced briefness of the presentation. This is particularly to be seen in the section dealing with society in which the significance of Marx's remark that " the bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production " is not developed. The reader is left with the knowledge that the contradiction between the material forces of production and the social organisation of production will continue under socialism, but in ignorance of the way in which this contradiction will express itself then or resolve itself later.

This tendency is again seen in the discussion of the general nature of dialectics where the examination of Lenin's fruitful " Notes on Hegel's Logic " could have been profitably extended.

While there is no question that a valuable method of explaining the position of Marxism is the critical examination of distortions of Marx's teachings, to attempt such methods in small compass may easily lead to greater confusion for the reader, who is frequently ignorant of the views which are being attacked. Condensation has in Guest's book led to this weakness in criticisms of Russell, Conze, Casey and others. An example is a footnote to a discussion of the social roots of utopian socialism—" Note also the pragmatist solipsist support given to Trotsky." The attention of the student is frequently in such cases distracted from the main line of argument.

Such difficulties have been fully overcome in the precise presentation of the fundamental conflict between materialism and idealism and in the interesting problems raised in relation to the rôle of Marxism in socialist culture.

But the weaknesses are more than compensated for by the fresh presentation of every problem. Such a book as this will prove invaluable in giving a student a preliminary orientation to the whole question of Marxist philosophy and should especially appeal to those who feel that dialectics are some " mysterious formulæ with occult properties." They will find the fundamental questions presented with clarity and with a refreshing recognition of present problems. J.E.

The Civilised Sixth of the World

The Socialist Sixth of the World by the Dean of Canterbury. (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.).

THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY is an exceptional Dean. Not many Deans of the Church of England have in their youth left their lodgings at 5.30 a.m. and returned home at 6 p.m. for 17s. a week, qualified as an engineer, and then taken part in running a family business. Not so many present-day Deans chose their career in the Church because they had developed " social misgivings " and their " social and religious instincts could not be satisfied with a career of professional engineering." Therefore, Dr. Hewlett Johnson is not typical.

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Just because of this, however, the Dean of Canterbury is particularly qualified to judge the Soviet Union. As a Dean, he should be qualified to make judgments from the "moral" standpoints as usually understood, but with this particular background he is also capable of seeing the Soviet Union from the point-of-view of the ordinary working man and woman, and to him the abolition of unemployment is as much a moral triumph as the abolition of prostitution; to give creative work to every human being according to their capacity is as great a moral achievement as any, and it is only the Socialist Sixth of the World that has achieved it.

The Dean's book opens with a short biographical note and an analysis of those shortcomings of capitalist society which caused the Dean to abandon engineering and enter the church. Then, in sharp contrast to the "twentieth-century frustration" suffered by capitalism, he describes the Plan which Socialism has created in the U.S.S.R., and the background against which we must view it in order to see it in perspective. There follows a vivid picture of the actual working out of the Soviet Plan—and this is where the engineering knowledge of the Dean gives him an understanding of the vital significance of such material things as industrial development in the building of a civilised society:

> Civilised living makes big demands on metals. A well-fitted house claims large quantities of iron, steel, copper and a long list of other metals . . . . Add all the homes together and you get the measure of demand for metals.

Thus, in a few lines, the intimate connection between the gigantic efforts of the Five Year Plans on the one hand, and the making of civilised homes for 180,000,000 Soviet citizens, is vividly brought home to the reader.

So, with electricity and coal, machines and transport. The Dean is able to show the immediate *human* necessity for these things, so that Soviet industrialisation is seen as the first essential for civilised living.

And then, on this material foundation, the Dean goes on to examine the "moral" aspects of Soviet development. To the Dean, a scientifically organised society is moral: "Moral growth advances side by side with scientific development." And the effects of the Soviet system on the children and the women and the working people of all races are summarised, and then illustrated with detailed sketches which include a number of the Dean's own experiences when in the U.S.S.R.

There are, of course, things in the U.S.S.R. of which the Dean does not approve. "Injustice and unhappiness have not been swept away overnight as if by magic." But "they are working for a common good that seems to me essentially Christian in its morality, however much they may deny the fact."

For those who do not agree with the Dean that the new life in the U.S.S.R. is specifically *Christian*, this book is of the greatest value, for it shows how, from the point of view of one who joined the church in protest against the iniquities of capitalism, only the U.S.S.R. is a solution to his problem. On the other hand, to those who desire to see the application of "Christian" principles to present-day life, the Dean presents an overwhelmingly strong case for the U.S.S.R. as against the social and economic system existing throughout the rest of the world.

Many books have been written on the U.S.S.R. But none of them so far has so perfectly combined technical knowledge, an appreciation of statistics to illustrate a point, a keen sense of the human side of the story, and a capacity for personal anecdote such as abound in this book.

Of all the books ever written on the U.S.S.R., this should certainly appeal to the most varied public. For it demonstrates the superiority of scientific socialism over capitalism, not only from the standpoint of reason, but also from those varying points of view which are vaguely bundled together under the term "moral."

PAT SLOAN.

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